TRAVEL ADVENTURE AND SPORT

FROM

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE

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TRAVEL,

ADVENTURE, AND SPORT

FROM

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TRAVEL, ADVENTURE, AND SPORT.

FROM 'BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.'

ALBERT SMITH'S ASCENT OF MONT BLANC.

[*MAGA.* JANUARY 1852.]

TWENTY-SEVEN years ago — when children's books were rare presents, and so were prized, and read, and read again, until the very position of the paragraphs was known by heart—I had a little volume given to me at the Soho bazaar, called 'The Peasants of Chamouni,' which told, in a very truthful manner, the sad story of Dr Hamel's fatal attempt to reach the summit of Mont Blanc in 1820. I daresay that it has long been out of print; but I have still my own old copy by me, and I find it was published by Baldwin, Cradock, & Joy, in 1823.

My notions of the Alps at that time were very

limited. We had a rise near our village called St Anne's Hill, from which it was fabled that the dome of St Paul's had once been seen with a telescope, at a distance of some sixteen or seventeen miles, as the crow flew: and its summit was the only high ground I had ever stood upon. Knowing no more than this, the little book, which I have said had a great air of truth about it, made a deep impression on me: I do not think that 'The Pilgrim's Progress' stood in higher favour. And this impression lasted from year to year. Always devouring the details of any work that touched upon the subject, I at length got a very fair idea, topographical and general, of the Alps. A kind friend gave me an old four-volume edition of 'De Saussure,' and my earliest efforts in French were endeavours to translate this work. I read the adventures of Captain Sherwill and Dr Clarke in the magazines of our local institution; and finally, I got up a small moving panorama of the horrors pertaining to Mont Blanc from Mr Auldjo's narrative—the best of all that I have read; and this I so painted up and exaggerated in my enthusiasm, that my little sister—who was my only audience, but a most admirable one, for she cared not how often I exhibited—would become quite pale with fright.

Time went on, and in 1838 I was entered as a pupil to the Hôtel Dieu, at Paris. My first love of the Alps had not faded; and when the *vacances*

came in September, with £12 in my pocket, and an old soldier's knapsack on my back (bought in a dirty street of the Quartier Latin for two or three francs), I started from Paris for Chamouni, with another equally humbly appointed fellow-student, now assistant surgeon in the —th Hussars.

It was very late one evening when I arrived at the little village of Sallenches, in Savoy—then a cluster of the humblest *châlets*, and not as now, since the conflagration, a promising town—very footsore and dusty. At the door of the inn I met old Victor Tairraz, who then kept the Hôtel de Londres at Chamouni, and was the father of the three brothers who now conduct it—one as *maître*, the second as cook, and the third as head waiter. He hoped when I arrived at Chamouni that I would come to his house; and he gave me a printed card of his prices, with a view of the establishment at the top of it, in which every possible peak of the Mont Blanc chain that could be selected from all points of the compass was collected into one aspect, supposed to be the view from all the bedroom windows of the establishment—in front, at the back, and on either side. I was annoyed at this card; for I could not reconcile, at that golden time, my early dreams of the valley of Chamouni with the ordinary business of a Star-and-Garter-like hotel.

I well remember what a night of expectation I passed, reflecting that on the early morrow I should

see Mont Blanc with my own practical eyes. When I got out of my bed the next morning—I cannot say "awoke," for I do not think I slept more than I should have done in the third class of a long night train—I went to the window, and the first view I had of the Mont Blanc range burst on me suddenly, through the mist,—that wondrous breath-checking *coup d'œil*, which we all must rave about when we have seen it for the first time—which we so sneer at others for doing when it has become familiar to us. Every step I took that day on the road was as on a journey to fairyland. Places which I afterwards looked upon as mere common halts for travellers—Servoz, with its little inn, and *Cabinet d'Histoire Naturelle*, where I bought my baton; the *montets* above Pont Pelissier; the huts at Les Ouches, where I got some milk—were all enchanted localities. And when, passing the last steep, as the valley of Chamouni opens far away to the left, the glittering rocky advanced post of the Glacier des Bossons came sparkling from the curve, I scarcely dared to look at it. Conscious that it was before me, some strange impulse turned my eyes towards any other objects — unimportant rocks and trees or cattle on the high pasturages—as though I feared to look at it. I never could understand this coquetting with excitement until years afterwards, when a young author told me a variety of the same feeling had seized him as he first saw a notice of his first book in a newspaper. He read the

paragraphs above and below and about it, but only glanced at the important one, as though striving constantly to renew the vivid pleasure he had felt upon first seeing it. The whole of that week at Chamouni passed like a dream. I started off every morning at daybreak with my alpenstock, and found my own way to the different "lions" of the valley—to Montanvert, the Flegère, the Pelerins, and the other points of resort; for the guide's six francs a-day would have made a great void in my student's purse. With the first light I used to watch the summit of Mont Blanc from my room; and at sunset I always went into the fields behind the church, to see the rosy light creep up it, higher and higher, until it stood once more—cold, clear, mocking the darkening peaks below it—against the sky. From long study of plans, and models, and narratives, I could trace every step of the route; and I do believe, if any stalwart companion had proposed it, with the recollection of what Jacques Balmat and Dr Paccard had done alone, I should have been mad enough to have started on their traces. I was in hopes, from the settled weather, that some one would attempt the ascent whilst I was at Chamouni; when I should immediately have offered myself as a volunteer or porter to accompany him. But no one came forward until the day after my departure; and then a lady, Mademoiselle Henriette d'Angeville, succeeded in reaching the top, together with the landlord of the Hôtel Royal,

and a Polish gentleman, who was stopping in the house.

When I came home to England I had many other things to think about. With the very hard work which the medical practice attached to a large country union required, I had little time for other employment. One dull evening, however, I routed out my old panorama, and as our little village was entirely occupied at the time with the formation of a literary and scientific institution, I thought I could make a grand lecture about the Alps. Availing myself of every half-hour I could spare, I copied all my pictures on a comparatively large scale — about three feet high—with such daring lights, and shadows, and streaks of sunset, that I have since trembled at my temerity as I looked at them; and then contriving some simple mechanism with a carpenter to make them roll on, I selected the most interesting parts of Mr Auldjo's narrative, and, with a few interpolations of my own, produced a lecture which, in the village, was considered quite a "hit,"—for the people had seen incandescent charcoal burnt in bottles of oxygen, and heard the physiology of the eye explained by diagrams, until any novelty was sure to succeed. For two or three years, with my Alps in a box, I went round to various literary institutions. The inhabitants of Richmond, Brentford, Guildford, Staines, Hammersmith, Southwark, and other places, were respectively enlightened upon the theory of glaciers,

and the dangers of the Grand Plateau. I recall these first efforts of a showman—for such they really were —with great pleasure. I recollect how my brother and I used to drive our four-wheeled chaise across the country, with Mont Blanc on the back seat, and how we were received, usually with the mistrust attached to wandering professors generally, by the man who swept out the town-hall, or the Athenæum, or wherever the institution might be located. As a rule, the Athenæums did not remind one of the Acropolis: they were situated up dirty lanes, and sometimes attached to public-houses, and were used, in the intervals of oxygen and the physiology of the eye, for tea festivals and infant schools. I remember well the "committee-room," and a sort of condemned cell in which the final ten minutes before appearing on the platform were spent, with its melancholy decanter of water and tumbler before the lecture, and plate of mixed biscuits and bottle of Marsala afterwards. I recollect, too, how the heat of my lamps would unsolder those above them, producing twilight and oil avalanches at the wrong time; and how my brother held a piece of wax-candle end behind the moon on the Grands Mulets (which always got applauded); and how the diligence, which went across a bridge, would sometimes tumble over. There are souvenirs of far greater import that I would throw over before those old Alpine memories.

No matter why, in the following years I changed

my lancet into a steel pen, and took up the trade of authorship. My love of the Alps still remained the same; and from association alone, I translated the French drama "La Grâce de Dieu," under the name of "The Pearl of Chamouni," for one of the London minor theatres. I brought forward all my old views, and made the directors get up the scenery as true to nature as could be expected in an English playhouse, where a belief in the unreal is the great creed; and then I was in the habit of sitting in a dark corner of the boxes, night after night, and wondering what the audience thought of "The Valley and Village of Chamouni, as seen from the Col de Balme Pass, with Mont Blanc in the distance:" so ran the bill. I believe, as far as they were concerned, I might have called it Snowdon or Ben Nevis with equal force; but I knew it was correct, and was satisfied.

In the ensuing seven or eight years I always went over to Chamouni whenever I had three weeks to spare in the autumn. Gradually the guides came to look upon me as an *habitué* of the village; and in our rambles I always found them clear-headed, intelligent, and even well-read companions. But whatever subject was started, we always got back to Mont Blanc in our conversation; and when I left Chamouni last year, Jean Tairraz made me half promise that I would come back again the following August, and try the ascent with him. All the winter through the intention haunted me. I knew, from my engage-

ments in periodical literature, that the effort must be a mere scamper—a spasm almost when it was made; but at length a free fortnight presented itself. I found my old knapsack in a store-room, and I beat out the moths and spiders, and filled it as of old; and on the first of August I left London Bridge in the mail-train of the South-Eastern Railway, with my Lord Mayor and other distinguished members of the corporation who were going to the *fêtes* at Paris, in honour of the Exhibition, and who, not having a knapsack under their seat, lost all their luggage, as is no doubt chronicled in the city archives.

I had not undergone the least training for my work. I came from my desk to the railway, from the railway to the diligence, and from that to the *char-à-banc;* and on the night of my arrival at Chamouni I sent for Tairraz, and we sat upon a bit of timber on the edge of the Arve, consulting upon the practicability of the ascent. He feared the weather was going to change, and that I was scarcely in condition to attempt it; but he would call a meeting of the chief guides at his little curiosity-shop next morning, and let me know the result. I made up my mind, at the same time, to walk as much as I could; and on the second day of my arrival, I went twice to the Mer de Glace, and, indeed, crossed to the other side by myself. In the courtyard of the Hôtel de Londres, on the Friday afternoon, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of three young gentlemen, who had

come from Ouchy on the Lake of Geneva, with the intention also of trying the ascent. It was immediately settled that we should unite our caravans; and that same evening, Jean Tairraz, Jean Tairraz the elder, Jean Carrier, and Gedeon Balmat, met us to settle our plans. The weather had unfortunately changed. It rained constantly: the wind came up the valley—always a bad sign—and the clouds were so low that we could not even see the *aiguilles*, nor the top of the Brevent. But so determined were we to go, that at all risks we should have ventured. Every arrangement of food, covering, &c., was left to M. Edouard Tairraz, the landlord of the excellent Hôtel de Londres; and it was understood that we were all to keep in readiness to start at half-an-hour's notice. My young friends, who had been in regular training for some time, continued to perform prodigies of pedestrianism. I did as much as I could; but, unfortunately, was taken so poorly on my return from Montanvert on the Monday—I suspect from sudden overwork, and sitting about in the wet—that I was obliged to lie down on my bed for four or five hours on my return to the hotel, and, in very low spirits, I began to despair of success.

All this time the weather never improved: it rained unceasingly. We almost rattled the barometer to pieces in our anxiety to detect a change; and Jean made an excursion with me to the cottage of one of the Balmats—the very same house spoken of in my

old book, 'The Peasants of Chamouni'—who was reported to have a wonderful and valuable weather-guide, the like of which had never been seen before in the valley, called *Le Menteur* by the neighbours, because it always foretold the reverse of what would happen. This turned out to be one of the little Dutch houses, with the meteorological lady and gentlemen occupiers. The lady, in her summer costume, was most provokingly abroad, and the worst fears were entertained. Whilst, however, we were at dinner that day, all the fog rolled away clean out of the valley as if by magic. The mists rose up the *aiguilles* like the flocks of steam from a valley railway; the sun broke out, and M. Tairraz cried out from the top of the table—"Voilà le beau temps qui vient: vous faites une belle ascension, Messieurs: et demain."

We thought no more of dinner that day: all was now hurry and preparation. At every stove in the kitchen, fowls, and legs and shoulders of mutton, were turning. The guides were beating up the porters, who were to carry the heavier baggage as far as the edge of the glacier; the peasants were soliciting us to be allowed to join the party as volunteers; and the inhabitants of the village generally had collected in the small open space between the church and the Hôtel de l'Union, and were talking over the chances of the excursion—for the mere report of an attempt puts them all in a bustle. We walked about

Chamouni that night with heads erect, and an imposing step. People pointed at us, and came from the hotels to see what we were like. For that evening, at least, we were evidently great persons.

The sun went down magnificently, and everything promised a glorious day on the morrow. I collected all my requisites. Our host lent me a pair of high gaiters, and Madame Tairraz gave me a fine pair of scarlet garters to tie them up with. I also bought a green veil, and Jean brought me a pair of blue spectacles. In my knapsack I put other shoes, socks, and trousers, and an extra shirt; and I got a new spike driven into my baton, for the glacier. I was still far from well, but the excitement pulled me through all discomfort. I did not sleep at all that night, from anxiety as to the success of the undertaking: I knew all the danger; and when I made a little parcel of my money, and the few things I had in my "kit," and told the friend who had come with me from London to take them home if I did not return, I am afraid my attempt to be careless about the matter was a failure. I had set a small infernal machine, that made a hideous noise at appointed hours, to go off at six; and I believe I heard every click it gave all through the night; and I forestalled its office in the morning by getting out of bed myself at sunrise and stopping it. We met at seven o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, the 12th, to breakfast. All our guides and porters had a feast in the garden,

and were in high spirits—for the glass had gone up half an inch, and not a cloud was to be seen in the sky. Nothing could exceed the bustle of the inn-yard; everybody had collected to see the start: the men were dividing and portioning the fowls, and bottles of wine, and rugs, and wrappers; something was constantly being forgotten, and nobody could find whatever was of most importance to them; and the good-tempered cook — another Tairraz — kept coming forth from the kitchen with so many additional viands that I began to wonder when our stores would be completed. The list of articles of food which we took up with us was as follows:—

NOTE No. 1.

PROVISIONS FOR THE ASCENT OF MONT BLANC.

HOTEL DE LONDRES,
CHAMOUNI, *August* 12, 1851.

		Francs.
60	bottles of Vin Ordinaire,	60
6	do. Bordeaux,	36
10	do. St George,	30
15	do. St Jean,	30
3	do. Cognac,	15
1	do. Syrup of raspberries,	3
6	do. Lemonade,	6
2	do. Champagne,	14
20	Loaves,	30
10	Small cheeses,	8
6	Packets of chocolate,	9
6	do. sugar,	6
	Carry forward,	247

	Francs.
Brought forward, . .	247
4 Packets of prunes, ...	6
4 do. raisins, ...	6
2 do. salt, ...	1
4 Wax candles, ...	4
6 Lemons, ...	1
4 Legs of mutton, ...	24
4 Shoulders, do., ...	12
6 Pieces of veal, ...	30
1 Piece of beef, ...	5
11 Large fowls, ...	30
35 Small do., ...	87
Total, . .	453

About half-past seven we started; and as we left the inn, and traversed the narrow ill-paved streets of Chamouni towards the bridge, I believe we formed the largest caravan that had ever gone off together. Each of us had four guides, making twenty in all;[1] and the porters and volunteers I may reckon at another score; besides which, there was a rabble-rout of friends, and relations, and sweethearts, and boys, some of whom came a considerable distance with us. I had a mule waiting for me at the bridle-road that

[1] The following were the names of our guides, copied from my certificate of the ascent: Jean Tairraz, Jean Tairraz, Jean Carrier, Gedeon Balmat, Michel Couttet, Frederic Tairraz, Pierre Cachat, Michel Couttet, François Cachat, Joseph Tairraz, Joseph Tissay, Edouard Carrier, Michel Devouassoud, Auguste Devouassoud, François Favret. One guide—I forget his name—was poorly, and could not sign, the next morning.

runs through the fields towards the dirty little village of Les Pelerins—for I wished to keep myself as fresh as I could for the real work. I do not think I gained anything by this, for the brute was exceedingly troublesome to manage up the rude steep path and amongst the trees. I expect my active young companions had the best of it on their own good legs. Dressed, at present, in light boating attire, they were types of fellows in first-rate fibrous muscular condition; and their sunny good-temper, never once clouded during the journey, made everything bright and cheering.

The first two hours of the ascent presented no remarkable features, either of difficulty or prospect. The path was very steep and rugged, through a stunted copse of pines and shrubs, between which we saw on our right the glistening ice-towers of the lower part of the Glacier des Bossons. On our left was the ravine, along which the torrent courses to form the Cascade des Pelerins. The two nice girls who keep the little refreshment *châlet* at the waterfall came across the wood to wish us God-speed. Julie Favret, the prettier of the two, was said to be engaged to our guide Jean Carrier—a splendid young fellow—so they lingered behind our caravan some little time; and when Jean rejoined us, an unmerciful shower of *badinage* awaited him. We kept on in single file, winding backwards and forwards amongst the trees, until we came to the last habitation up the mountain, which is called the Châlet de la Para; and

here I was glad to quit my mule, and proceed with the rest on foot. From this point the vegetation gradually became more scanty, and at last even the fir-trees no longer grew about us. The hillside was bare and arid, covered with the *débris* of the spring avalanches — amongst which tufts of alpine rhododendron were blowing—and some goats were trying very hard to pick up a living. Our caravan was now spread about far and wide; but at half-past nine we came to an enormous block of granite called the Pierre Pointue, and here we reunited our forces and rested a while. During our halt the porters readjusted their packs; and some who had carried or dragged up billets of wood with them, which they found on the way, chopped them into lengths and tied them on to their knapsacks. The weight some of these men marched under was surprising. Hitherto we had been on the ridge of one of the mighty buttresses of Mont Blanc, which hem in the glaciers between them: we had now to cling along its side to gain the ice. This part of the journey requires a strong head: here, and towards the termination of the ascent, dizziness would be fatal. Along the side of the mountain, which is all but perpendicular, the goats have worn a rude track, scarcely a foot broad. On your left your shoulder rubs the rock; and on your right there is a frightful precipice, at the bottom of which, hundreds of feet below you, is that confusion of ice, granite blocks, stones, and dirty roaring water,

which forms in its *ensemble* the boundary of a glacier. The view is superb, but you dare not look at it. It is only when the loose ground crumbles away beneath your right foot, and you nearly slide away over the precipice — you would do so if the guide did not seize you by the arm with the sudden grip of a vice —that you give up staring about you, and do nothing but carefully watch the footsteps of the man who is going on before. The path goes up and down—its gradual tendency, however, is to descend; and in about twenty minutes we had arrived at the bottom of the ravine. Here we had another half-hour's troublesome scramble over loose boulders, which threw and twisted our ankles about in every direction, until at last we gained the second station, if it may so be called, of our journey—another huge rock called the Pierre à l'Echelle, under shelter of which a ladder is left from one year to the other, and is carried on by the guides, to assist them in passing the crevices on the glacier. The remains of an old one were likewise lying here, and the rungs of it were immediately seized for firewood.

We were now four thousand feet above Chamouni, and the wonders of the glacier world were breaking upon us. The edge of the ice was still half-an-hour's walk beyond this rock, but it appeared close at hand —literally within a stone's-throw. So vast is everything that surrounds the traveller—there is such an utter absence of any comprehensible standard of com-

parison — his actual presence is so insignificant — a mere unheeded, all but invisible speck on this mountain world — that every idea of proportionate size or distance is lost. And this impossibility of calculation is still further aided by the bright clear air, seen through which the granite outlines, miles away, are as sharply defined as those of the rocks you have quitted but half an hour ago.

Far below us, long after the torrents had lost themselves in little grey threads amongst the pine-woods, we saw the valley of Chamouni, with its fields and pastures parcelled out into parti-coloured districts, like the map of an estate sale; and we found the peaks of other mountains beginning to show above and beyond the lofty Brevent. Above us, mighty plains of snow stretched far and away in all directions; and through them the ice-crags and pinnacles of the two glaciers, Bossons and Tacconay, were everywhere visible. On either side of us, at the distance perhaps of a couple of miles from each other, were the two huge buttresses of Mont Blanc which form the channel of the glacier before alluded to. Along one of these we had come up from the valley: De Saussure chose the other when he made his ascent in 1787. High up the sides of these mountains were wondrous cornices of ice of incalculable weight, threatening to fall every instant. Pieces now and then tumbled down with a noise like distant thunder; but they were not large enough to be dangerous. Had a block of several

tons descended at once, its momentum would have carried it along the glacier, sweeping everything before it; and of this occurrence the guides are constantly in dread.

We rested here nearly half an hour; and it was not until we unpacked some of our cold fowls from the 'Galignanis' in which they were rolled, that we found our knives and forks had been left behind. Tairraz thought Balmat had them—and Balmat had told Carrier to look after them—and Carrier had seen them on the bench outside the hotel just as we started, and expected young Devouassoud had put them in his knapsack — and so it went on. But nobody in the end had brought them. Most of us, however, had pocket-knives; and what we could not carve we pulled to pieces with our fingers, and made a famous meal. The morning was so bright, and the air so pure, and the view so grand, and we were already so fatigued — or fancied we were — that I believe, if the guides had not beaten us up again into marching order, we should have dawdled about this Pierre à l'Echelle for half the day. So we took our batons and started off again; and after a troublesome scuffle over the grimy border of the glacier we reached its clean edge, and bade good-bye to firm footing and visible safety for the rest of the excursion.

The first portion of the journey across the Glacier des Bossons is easy enough, provided always that the

outer crust of the snow lying upon it is tolerably hard. We marched on in single file, the guides taking it by turns to lead (as the first man had of course the heaviest work), amidst cliffs and hillocks, and across sloping fields and uplands, all of dazzling whiteness. I here observed, for the first time, the intense dark-blue colour which the sky apparently assumes. This is only by comparison with the unsubdued glare from the snow on all sides—since, on making a kind of *lorgnette* with my two hands, and looking up, as I might have done at a picture, there was nothing unusual in the tint. Our veils and glasses now proved great comforts, for the sun was scorching and the blinding light from the glaciers actually distressing. By degrees our road became less practicably easy. We had to make zigzag paths up very steep pitches, and go out of our line to circumvent threatening ice-blocks or suspected crevices. The porters, too, began to grumble, and there was a perpetual wrangling going on between them and the guides as to the extent of their auxiliary march; and another bottle of wine had constantly to be added to the promised reward when they returned to Chamouni. All this time we had been steadily ascending; and at last the glacier was so broken, and the crevices so frequent and hugely gaping, that the guides tied us and themselves together with cords, leaving a space of about eight feet between each two men, and prepared for serious work.

The traveller who has only seen the Mer de Glace can form no idea of the terrific beauty of the upper part of the Glacier des Bossons. He remembers the lower portions of the latter, which appears to rise from the very corn-fields and orchards of Chamouni, with its towers and ruins of the purest ice, like a long fragment of quartz inconceivably magnified; and a few steps from the edge of Montanvert will show him the icy chasms of the Mer. But they have little in common with the wild and awful tract we were now preparing to traverse. The Glacier des Bossons, splitting away from that of Tacconay, is rent and torn and tossed about by convulsions scarcely to be comprehended; and the alternate action of the nightly frost and the afternoon sun on this scene of splendid desolation and horror, produces the most extraordinary effects. Huge bergs rise up of a lovely pale sea-green colour, perforated by arches decorated every day with fresh icicles many feet in length; and through these arches one sees other fantastic masses, some thrown like bridges across yawning gulfs, and others planted like old castles on jutting rocks commanding valleys and gorges, all of ice. There is here no plain surface to walk upon; your only standing-room is the top of the barrier that divides two crevices; and as this is broad or narrow, terminating in another frightful gulf, or continuous with another treacherous ice-wall, so can you be slow or rapid. The breadth of the crevice varies with

each one you arrive at, and these individually vary constantly, so that the most experienced guide can have no fixed plan of route. The fissure you can leap across to-day, becomes by to-morrow a yawning gulf.

Young Devouassoud now took the lead, with a light axe to cut out footsteps and hand-holds with when necessary, and we all followed, very cautiously placing our feet in the prints already made. "*Choisez vos pas*" was a phrase we heard every minute. Our progress was necessarily very slow; and sometimes we were brought up altogether for a quarter of an hour, whilst a council was held as to the best way of surmounting a difficulty. Once only the neck of ice along which we had to pass was so narrow that I preferred crossing it saddle-fashion, and so working myself on with my hands. It was at points similar to this that I was most astonished at the daring and sure-footedness of the guides. They took the most extraordinary jumps, alighting upon banks of ice that shelved at once clean down to the edges of frightful crevices, to which their feet appeared to cling like those of flies. And yet we were all shod alike—in good stout "shooting-shoes," with a double row of hobnails; but, where I was sliding and tumbling about, they stood like rocks. In all this there was, however, little physical exertion for us—it was simply a matter of nerve and steady head. Where the crevice was small, we contrived to jump

over it with tolerable coolness; and where it was over three or four feet in breadth, we made a bridge of the ladder, and walked over on the rounds. There is no great difficulty, to be sure, in doing this, when a ladder lies upon the ground; but with a chasm of unknown depth below it, it is satisfactory to get to the other side as quickly as possible.

At a great many points the snow made bridges, which we crossed easily enough. Only one was permitted to go over at a time; so that, if it gave way, he might remain suspended by the rope attached to the main body. Sometimes we had to make long detours to get to the end of a crevice, too wide to cross any way; at others, we would find ourselves all wedged together, not daring to move, on a neck of ice that at first I could scarcely have thought adequate to have afforded footing to a goat. When we were thus fixed, somebody cut notches in the ice, and climbed up or down as the case required; then the knapsacks were pulled up or lowered; then we followed, and finally, the rest got up as they could. One scramble we had to make was rather frightful. The reader must imagine a valley of ice, very narrow, but of unknown depth. Along the middle of this there ran a cliff, also of ice, very narrow at the top, and ending suddenly, the surface of which might have been fifteen feet lower than the top of this valley on either side, and on it we could not stand two abreast. A rough notion of a section of this

position may be gained from the letter W, depressing the centre angle, and imagining that the cliff on which we were standing. The feet of our ladders were set firm on the neck of the cliff, and then it was allowed to lean over the crevice until its other end touched the wall, so to speak, of the valley. Its top round was, even then, seven or eight feet below where we wanted to get. One of the young guides went first with his axe, and contrived, by some extraordinary succession of gymnastic feats, to get safely to the top, although we all trembled for him—and indeed for ourselves; for, tied as we all were, and on such a treacherous standing, had he stumbled he would have pulled the next after him, and so on, one following the other, until we should all have gone hopelessly to perdition. Once safe, he soon helped his fellows, and one after the other we were drawn up, holding to the cord for our lives. The only accident that befell me on the journey here happened. Being pulled quickly up, my ungloved hand encountered a sharp bit of granite frozen in the ice, and this cut through the veins on my wrist. The wound bled furiously for a few minutes; but the excitement of the scramble had been so great, that I actually did not know I was hurt until I saw the blood on the snow. I tied my handkerchief round the cut, and it troubled me no more; but from such hurried surgery it has left a pretty palpable scar.

Our porters would go no farther — promises and

bribes were now in vain—and they gave up their luggage and set off on their way back to Chamouni. We now felt, indeed, a forlorn hope ; but fortunately we did not encounter anything worse than we had already surmounted; and about four o'clock in the afternoon we got to the station at which we were to remain until midnight.

The Grands Mulets are two or three conical rocks which rise like island-peaks from the snow and ice at the head of the Glacier des Bossons, and were they loftier, would probably be termed *aiguilles*. They are visible with the naked eye from Chamouni, appearing like little cones on the mountain-side. Looking up to them, their left-hand face, or outer side, as I shall call it, goes down straight at once, some hundred feet, to the glacier. On the right hand, and in front, you can scramble up to them pretty well and gain your resting-place, which is about thirty feet from the summit, either by climbing the rock from the base, which is very steep and fatiguing, or by proceeding farther up along the snow, and then returning a little way, when you find yourself nearly on a level with your shelf—for such it is. A familiar example of what I mean is given in a house built on a steep hill, where the backdoor may be on the third storey.

The ascent of this rock was the hardest work we had yet experienced: it was like climbing up an immense number of flagstones of different heights

set on their edges. Before we got half-way, we heard them firing guns at Chamouni, which showed us that we were being watched from the village; and this gave us fresh energy. At last we reached something like a platform, ten or twelve feet long and three or four broad; and below this was another tolerably level space, with a low parapet of loose stones built round it, whilst here and there were several nooks and corners which might shelter people on emergency. We acknowledged the salute at Chamouni by sticking one of our batons into a crevice, and tying a handkerchief to the top of it, and then set to work to clear away the snow from our resting-place. Contrary to all my expectation, the heat we here experienced was most sultry, and even distressing. Those who have noted how long the granite posts and walls of the Italian cities retain the heat after the sun has gone down, will understand that this rock upon which we were was quite warm wherever the rays fell upon it, although in every nook of shade the snow still remained unthawed.

As soon as we had arranged our packs and bundles we began to change our clothes, which were tolerably well wet through with trudging and tumbling about among the snow; and cutting a number of pegs, we strewed our garments about the crannies of the rocks to dry. I put on two shirts, two pairs of lamb's-wool socks, a thick pair of Scotch plaid trousers, a "Templar" worsted headpiece, and a common blouse; and

my companions were attired in a similar manner. There was now great activity in the camp. Some of the guides ranged the wine-bottles side by side in the snow; others unpacked the refreshment knapsacks; others, again, made a rude fireplace, and filled a stew-pan with snow to melt. All this time it was so hot, and the sun was so bright, that I began to think the guide who told De Saussure he should take a parasol up with him did not deserve to have been laughed at.

As soon as our wild bivouac assumed a little appearance of order, two of the guides were sent up the glacier to go a great way ahead, and then return and report upon the state of the snow on the plateaux. When they had started, we perched ourselves about, on the comparatively level spaces of the rock, and with knife and fingers began our dinner.

We had scarcely commenced when our party was joined by a young Irishman and a guide, who had taken advantage of the beaten track left behind us, and marched up on our traces with tolerable ease, leaving to us the honour (and the expense) of cutting out the path. My younger friends, with a little ebullition of university feeling, proposed, under such circumstances, that we should give him a reception in keeping with the glacier; but I thought it would be so hyper-punctilious to show temper here, on the Grands Mulets rocks, up and away in the regions of eternal snow, some thousand feet from the level world, that I ventured on a very mild hint to this effect,

which was received with all the acquiescence and good temper imaginable. So we asked him to contribute his stores to our table, and I daresay should have got on very well together, but the guides began to squabble about what they considered a breach of etiquette, and presently, with his attendant, he moved away to the next rock. Afterwards another "follower" arrived with two guides, and he subsequently reached the summit.

We kept high festival that afternoon on the Grands Mulets. One stage of our journey—and that one by no means the easiest—had been achieved without the slightest hurt or harm. The consciousness of success thus far, the pure transparent air, the excitement attached to the very position in which we found ourselves, and the strange bewildering novelty of the surrounding scenery, produced a flowing exhilaration of spirits that I had never before experienced. The feeling was shared by all; and we laughed and sang, and made the guides contribute whatever they could to the general amusement, and told them such stories as would translate well in return, until, I believe, that dinner will never be forgotten by them. A fine diversion was afforded by racing the empty bottles down the glacier. We flung them off from the rock as far as we were able, and then watched their course. Whenever they chanced to point neck first down the slope, they started off with inconceivable velocity, leaping the crevices by their own impetus, until they

were lost in the distance. The excitement of the guides during this amusement was very remarkable: a stand of betting-men could not have betrayed more at the Derby. Their anxiety when one of the bottles approached a crevice was intense; and if the gulf was cleared, they perfectly screamed with delight. "*Voici un bon coureur!*" or "*Tiens! comme il saut bien!*" burst from them; and "*Le grand s'arrête!*" "*Il est perdu—quel dommage!*" "*Non—il marche encore!*" could not have been uttered with more earnestness had they been watching a herd of chamois.

It got somewhat chilly as the sun left the Mulets, but never so cold as to be uncomfortable. With my back against the rock, and a common railway rug over my feet and legs, I needed nothing else. My knapsack was handy at my elbow to lean upon—the same old companion that had often served for my pillow on the Mediterranean and the Nile; and so I had altogether the finest couch upon which a weary traveller ever rested.

I have, as yet, purposely abstained from describing the glorious view above, around, and beneath us, for the details of our bivouac would have interrupted me as much as the arrangements actually did, until we got completely settled for the night—at least so much of it as we were to pass there. The Grands Mulets rocks are evidently the highest spines, so to speak, of a ridge of the mountain dividing the origin of the

two glaciers of Bossons and Tacconay. They are chosen for a halting-place, not less from their convenient station on the route than from their situation out of the way of the avalanches. From the western face of the peak on which we were situated we could not see Chamouni, except by climbing up to the top of the rock—rather a hazardous thing to do—and peeping over it, when the whole extent of the valley could be very well made out; the villages looking like atoms of white grit upon the checkered ground. Below us, and rising against our position, was the mighty field of the glacier—a huge prairie, if I may term it so, of snow and ice, with vast irregular undulations, which gradually merged into an apparently smooth unbroken tract, as their distance increased. Towering in front of us, several thousand feet higher, and two or three miles away, yet still having the strange appearance of proximity that I have before alluded to, was the huge Dôme du Gouté — the mighty cupola usually mistaken by the valley travellers for the summit of Mont Blanc. Up the glacier, on my left, was an enormous and ascending valley of ice, which might have been a couple of miles across; and in its course were two or three steep banks of snow, hundreds of feet in height, giant steps by which the level landing-place of the Grand Plateau was to be reached. On the first and lowest of these we could make out two dots slowly toiling up the slope. They were the pioneers we had started from

the Mulets on arriving, and their progress thus far was considered a proof that the snow was in good order. Still farther up, above the level which marked the Grand Plateau, was the actual summit of Mont Blanc. As I looked at it, I thought that in two hours' good walking, along a route apparently as smooth as a racecourse after a moderate fall of snow, it might be easily reached; but immediately my eye returned to the two specks who had already taken up that time in painfully toiling to their present position. The next instant the attempt seemed hopeless, even in a day. As it was now, with the last five hours' unceasing labour and continuous ascent, the lower parts of the glacier that we had traversed appeared close at hand; but when I looked down to my right, across the valley, and saw the Brevent—to get to the summit of which, from Chamouni, requires hours of toil,—when I saw this lofty wall of the valley gradually assuming the appearance of a mere ploughed ridge, I was again struck with the bewildering impossibility of bringing down anything in this "world of wonders"[1] to the ordinary rules or experiences of proportion and distance.

The sun at length went down behind the Aiguille du Gouté, and then, for two hours, a scene of such wild and wondrous beauty—of such inconceivable

[1] "A world of wonders, where creation seems
No more the works of Nature, but her Dreams."
—MONTGOMERY.

and unearthly splendour—burst upon me, that, spell-bound and almost trembling with the emotion its magnificence called forth—with every sense and feeling and thought absorbed by its brilliancy, I saw far more than the realisation of the most gorgeous visions that opium or *hasheesh* could evoke, accomplished. At first, everything about us—above, around, below—the sky, the mountain, and the lower peaks—appeared one uniform creation of burnished gold, so brightly dazzling that, now our veils were removed, the eye could scarcely bear the splendour. As the twilight gradually crept over the lower world the glow became still more vivid; and presently, as the blue mist rose in the valleys, the tops of the higher mountains looked like islands rising from a filmy ocean — an archipelago of gold. By degrees this metallic lustre was softened into tints,—first orange, and then bright transparent crimson, along the horizon, rising through the different hues with prismatic regularity, until, immediately above us, the sky was a deep pure blue, merging towards the east into glowing violet. The snow took its colour from these changes; and every portion on which the light fell was soon tinged with pale carmine, of a shade similar to that which snow at times assumes, from some imperfectly explained cause, at high elevations—such, indeed, as I had seen in early summer upon the Furka and Faulhorn. These beautiful hues grew brighter as the twilight below increased in depth;

and it now came marching up the valley of the glaciers until it reached our resting-place. Higher and higher still, it drove the lovely glory of the sunlight before it, until at last the vast Dôme du Gouté and the summit itself stood out, ice-like and grim, in the cold evening air, although the horizon still gleamed with a belt of rosy light.

Although this superb spectacle had faded away, the scene was still even more than striking. The fire which the guides had made, and which was now burning and crackling on a ledge of rock a little below us, threw its flickering light with admirable effect upon our band. The men had collected round the blaze, and were making some chocolate, as they sang *patois* ballads and choruses: they were all evidently as completely at home as they would have been in their own *châlets*. We had arranged ourselves as conveniently as we could, so as not to inconvenience one another, and had still nothing more than an ordinary wrapper over us; there had been no attempt to build the tent with batons and canvas, as I had read in some of the Mont Blanc narratives —the starry heaven was our only roofing. F. and P. were already fast asleep. W. was still awake, and I was too excited even to close my eyes in the attempt to get a little repose. We talked for a while, and then he also was silent.

The stars had come out, and looking over the plateau, I soon saw the moonlight lying cold and

silvery on the summit, stealing slowly down the very track by which the sunset glories had passed upward and away. But it came so tardily that I knew it would be hours before we derived any actual benefit from the light. One after another the guides fell asleep, until only three or four remained round the embers of the fire, thoughtfully smoking their pipes. And then silence, impressive beyond expression, reigned over our isolated world. Often and often, from Chamouni, I had looked up at evening towards the darkening position of the Grands Mulets, and thought, almost with shuddering, how awful it must be for men to pass the night in such a remote, eternal, and frozen wilderness. And now I was lying there—in the very heart of its ice-bound and appalling solitude. In such close communion with nature in her grandest aspect, with no trace of the actual living world beyond the mere speck that our little party formed, the mind was carried far away from its ordinary trains of thought — a solemn emotion of mingled awe and delight, and yet self-perception of abject nothingness, alone rose above every other feeling. A vast untrodden region of cold, and silence, and death, stretched out, far and away from us, on every side; but above, heaven, with its countless watchful eyes, was over all!

It was twenty minutes to twelve when the note of preparation for our second start was sounded. Tairraz shook up the more drowsy of the guides, and they

were soon bustling about, and making their arrangements for the work before us. They had not much to carry now. Everything, with the exception of a few bottles of wine, some small loaves, and two or three cold fowls, was to be left on the Grands Mulets: there was no danger of theft from passers-by, as Carrier observed. This quarter of an hour before midnight was, I think, the heaviest during the journey. Now that we were going to leave our lodging, I did feel uncommonly tired; and wild and rugged as it was, I began to think the blankets and wrappers looked very comfortable in the ruddy firelight, compared to the glooming desert of ice before us. The moon was still low—that is to say, the light on the mountain had not come farther down than the top of the Aiguille du Gouté, so that we were in comparative darkness. Three or four lanterns were fitted up with candles; and Jean Tairraz had a fine affair like a Chinese balloon, or more truly the round *lampions* used in French illuminations, only larger; and this he tied behind him to light me as I followed. Michael Devouassoud took the lead; we came after him with regular numbers of guides, each traveller having a lantern carried before him, and then another guide or two, lightly laden. In this order, in single file, we left the Grands Mulets—not by the scrambling route of our arrival, but by the upper portion of the rocks, where we descended at once, in a few feet, to the snow. As we passed the upper Mulets,

we heard our Irish follower "keeping it up" by himself in most convivial fashion, and singing "God save the Queen" to his guide. Soon afterwards we saw his lantern glimmering on our traces; and the light of the second aspirant was also visible, moving about before his start.

The snowy side of Mont Blanc, between the Grands Mulets and the Rochers Rouges near the summit, is formed by three gigantic steps, if they may so be called, one above the other, each of which is many hundred feet high. Between each is a comparatively level platform of glacier; and the topmost of these, which is two or three miles across, is called the Grand Plateau. Its position can be made out very well from Chamouni with the naked eye. Up these slopes our road now lay; and for more than two hours we followed one another in silence—now trudging over the level places, and now slowly climbing, in zigzag, up the steeps. Very little talking went on, for we knew that we should soon need all our breath. The walking here, however, was by no means difficult; for the snow was hard and crisp, and we made very good progress, although, for a long time, we saw the red speck of fire, far below us, gleaming on the Grands Mulets. The stars were out, and the air was sharp and cold, but only disagreeably biting when the lightest puff of wind came. This was not very often, for we were sheltered on all sides by the heights and *aiguilles* around us.

The march from the Mulets to the foot of the Grand Plateau was the most unexciting part of the journey. It was one continuous, steadily ascending tramp of three hours and a half—now and then retracing our footmarks with a little grumbling, when it was found, on gaining the neck of a ridge of snow, that there was an impracticable crevice on the other side; but the general work was not much more than that of ascending the Mer de Glace, on your route to the Jardin. Whenever we came to a standstill, our feet directly got very cold; and the remedy for this was to drive them well into the snow. The guides were anxious that we should constantly keep in motion; and, indeed, they were never still themselves during these halts.

We had nearly gained the edge of the Grand Plateau when our caravan was suddenly brought to a stop by the announcement from our leading guide of a huge crevice ahead, to which he could not see any termination; and it was far too wide to cross by any means. It appeared that the guides had looked forward all along to some difficulty here, and they were now really anxious; for Tairraz said, that if we could not reach the other side our game was up, and we must return. Auguste Devouassoud went ahead and called for a lantern. We had now only one left alight: two had burnt out, and the other had been lost, shooting away like a meteor down the glacier until it disappeared in a gulf. The remaining light

was handed forward, and we watched its course with extreme anxiety, hovering along the edge of the abyss—anon disappearing and then showing again farther off—until at last Auguste shouted out that he had found a pass, and that we could proceed again. We toiled up a very steep cliff of ice, and then edged the crevice which yawned upon our left in a frightful manner—more terrible in its semi-obscurity than it is possible to convey an impression of—until the danger was over, and we all stood safely upon the Grand Plateau about half-past three in the morning.

We had now two or three miles of level walking before us; indeed our road, from one end of the plateau to the other, was on a slight descent. Before we started we took some wine: our appetites were not very remarkable in spite of all our work; but a leathern cup of St George put a little life and warmth into us, for we were chilled with the delay, and it was now intensely cold. We also saw the other lanterns approaching, and we now formed, as it were, one long caravan. Still in single file we set off again, and the effect of our silent march was now unearthly and solemn to a degree that was almost painfully impressive. Mere atoms in this wilderness of perpetual frost, we were slowly advancing over the vast plain—slowly following each other on the track which the leading glimmering dot of light aided the guide to select. The reflected moonlight from the Dôme du Gouté, which looked like a huge mountain of

frosted silver, threw a cold gleam over the plateau, sufficient to show its immense and ghastly space. High up on our right was the summit of Mont Blanc, apparently as close and as inaccessible as ever; and immediately on our left was the appalling gulf, yawning in the ice of unknown depth, into which the avalanche swept Dr Hamel's guides, and in whose depths, ice-bound and unchanged, they are yet locked. Tairraz crept close to me, and said, through his teeth, almost in a whisper—"C'est ici, Monsieur, que mon frère Auguste est peri en 1820, avec Balmat et Carrier: les pauvres corps sont encore la bas!—ça me donne de peine, toujours, en traversant le Plateau; et la route est encore perilleuse." "Et les avalanches?" I asked—"tombent elles toujours?" "Oui, Monsieur, toujours—nuit et jour. Le plutôt passé, mieux pour nous!"

In fact, although physically the easiest, this was the most treacherous part of the entire ascent. A flake of snow or a chip of ice, whirled by the wind from the summit, and increasing as it rolled down the top of the mountain, might at length thunder on to our path, and sweep everything before it into the crevice. Everybody was aware of this; and for three quarters of an hour we kept trudging hurriedly forward, scarcely daring to speak, and every now and then looking up with mistrust at the *calotte*, as the summit is termed, that rose above us in such cold and deceitful tranquillity. Once or twice in my life

I have been placed in circumstances of the greatest peril, and I now experienced the same dead calm in which my feelings always were sunk on these occasions. I knew that every step we took was gained from the chance of a horrible death; and yet the only thing that actually distressed me was, that the two front lanterns would not keep the same distance from one another—a matter of the most utter unimportance to everybody.

At last we got under the shelter of the Rochers Rouges, and then we were in comparative safety; since, were an avalanche to fall, they would turn its course on to the plateau we had just quitted. A small council was assembled there. The Irishman, who had got a little ahead of us, was compelled to give in—he was done up and could go no farther. Indeed, it would have been madness to have attempted it, for we found him lying on the snow, vomiting frightfully, with considerable hemorrhage from the nose. I think this must have been about the same elevation at which young Mr Talfourd was compelled to give in, in 18—. I told our poor companion that he must not think the worse of us for leaving him there with his guide, as unfortunately we could do nothing for him; but I recommended him to go back as speedily as he could to the Grands Mulets, where he would find everything that he might require. He took this advice; and, indeed, we found him still at the rock on our return.

As we reached the almost perpendicular wall of ice below the Rochers Rouges, we came into the full moonlight; and at the same time, far away on the horizon, the red glow of daybreak was gradually tinging the sky, and bringing the higher and more distant mountains into relief. The union of these two effects of light was very strange. At first, simply cold and bewildering, it had nothing of the sunset glories of the Grands Mulets; but after a time, when peak after peak rose out from the gloomy world below, the spectacle was magnificent. In the dark boundless space a small speck of light would suddenly appear, growing larger and larger, until it took the palpable form of a mountain-top. Whilst this was going on, other points would brighten here and there, and increase in the same manner; then a silvery gleam would mark the position of a lake reflecting the sky—it was that of Geneva—until the grey hazy ocean lighted up into hills and valleys and irregularities, and the entire world below warmed into the glow of sunrise. We were yet in gloom, shadowed by the Aiguille Sans Nom, with the summit of Mont Blanc shut out from us by the Rochers Rouges; but of course it must have been the earliest to catch the rays.

It was now fearfully cold, and every now and then a sharp north-east wind nearly cut us into pieces, bringing with it a storm of spiculæ of ice, which were really very painful, as they blew against and past our faces and ears; so we took to our veils again,

which all night long had been twisted round our hats. I felt very chilled and dispirited. I had now passed two nights without sleep; and I had really eaten nothing since the yesterday's morning but part of an egg, a piece of fowl, and a little bit of bread—for my illness had taken away all my appetite; and on this small diet I had been undergoing the greatest work. But none of us were complaining of nausea, or difficulty of breathing, or blood to the head, or any of the other symptoms which appear to have attacked most persons even on the Grand Plateau; so I plucked up fresh courage, and prepared for our next achievement.

This was no light affair. From the foot of the Rochers Rouges there runs a huge and slanting buttress of ice, round which we had to climb from the north-east to the east. Its surface was at an angle of about sixty degrees. Above us it terminated in a mighty cliff, entirely covered with icicles of marvellous length and beauty; below, it was impossible to see where it went, for it finished suddenly in an edge, which was believed to be the border of a great crevice. Along this we now had to go; and the journey was as hazardous a one as a man might make along a steeply pitched roof with snow on it. Jean Carrier went first with his axe, and very cautiously cut every step in which we were to place our feet in the ice. It is difficult at times to walk along ice on a level; but when that ice is tilted up more than half-way towards

the perpendicular, with a fathomless termination below, and no more foot and hand hold afforded than can be chipped out, it becomes a nervous affair enough. The cords came into requisition again; and we went along, leaning very much over to our right, and, I must say, paying little attention to our guides, who were continually pointing out spots for us to admire —the Jardin, Monte Rosa, and the Col du Géant— as they became visible. It took us nearly half an hour to creep round this hazardous slope, and then we came once more upon a vast undulating field of ice, looking straight down the Glacier du Tacul, towards the upper part of the Mer de Glace—the reverse of the view the visitor enjoys from the Jardin.

My eyelids had felt very heavy for the last hour; and but for the absolute mortal necessity of keeping them widely open, I believe would have closed before this; but now such a strange and irrepressible desire to go to sleep seized hold of me, that I almost fell fast off as I sat down for a few minutes on the snow to tie my shoes. But the foremost guides were on the march again, and I was compelled to go on with the caravan. From this point, on to the summit, for a space of two hours, I was in such a strange state of mingled unconsciousness and acute observation—of combined sleeping and waking—that the old-fashioned word "bewitched" is the only one that I can apply to the complete confusion and upsetting of sense in which I found myself plunged. With the perfect

knowledge of where I was, and what I was about—even with such caution as was required to place my feet on particular places in the snow—I conjured up such a set of absurd and improbable phantoms about me, that the most spirit-ridden intruder upon a May-day festival on the Hartz mountains was never more beleaguered. I am not sufficiently versed in the finer theories of the psychology of sleep to know if such a state might be; but I believe for the greater part of this bewildering period I was fast asleep, with my eyes open, and through them the wandering brain received external impressions: in the same manner as, upon waking, the phantasms of our dreams are sometimes carried on, and connected with objects about the chamber. It is very difficult to explain the odd state in which I was, so to speak, entangled. A great many people I knew in London were accompanying me, and calling after me, as the stones did after Prince Perviz in the 'Arabian Nights.' Then there was some terribly elaborate affair that I could not settle, about two bedsteads, the whole blame of which transaction, whatever it was, lay on my shoulders; and then a literary friend came up, and told me he was sorry we could not pass over his ground on our way to the summit, but that the King of Prussia had forbidden it. Everything was as foolish and unconnected as this, but it worried me painfully; and my senses were under such little control, and I reeled and staggered about so, that when we had crossed the

snow prairie, and arrived at the foot of an almost perpendicular wall of ice, four or five hundred feet high —the terrible Mur de la Côte—up which we had to climb, I sat down again on the snow, and told Tairraz that I would not go any farther, but that they might leave me there if they pleased.

The Mont Blanc guides are used to these little varieties of temper above the Grand Plateau. In spite of my mad determination to go to sleep, Balmat and another set me up on my legs again, and told me that if I did not exercise every caution, we should all be lost together, for the most really dangerous part of the whole ascent had arrived. I had the greatest difficulty in getting my wandering wits into order; but the risk called for the strongest mental effort, and, with just sense enough to see that our success in scaling this awful precipice was entirely dependent upon "pluck," I got ready for the climb. I have said the Mur de la Côte is some hundred feet high, and is an all but perpendicular iceberg. At one point you can reach it from the snow, but immediately after you begin to ascend it obliquely, there is nothing below but a chasm in the ice more frightful than anything yet passed. Should the foot slip or the baton give way, there is no chance for life—you would glide like lightning from one frozen crag to another, and finally be dashed to pieces, hundreds and hundreds of feet below, in the horrible depths of the glacier. Were it in the valley, simply rising up from a glacier *mo-*

raine, its ascent would require great nerve and caution; but here, placed fourteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, terminating in an icy abyss so deep that the bottom is lost in obscurity; exposed, in a highly rarefied atmosphere, to a wind cold and violent beyond all conception; assailed, with muscular powers already taxed far beyond their strength, and nerves shaken by constantly increasing excitement and want of rest—with bloodshot eyes, and raging thirst, and a pulse leaping rather than beating,—with all this, it may be imagined that the frightful Mur de la Côte calls for no ordinary determination to mount it.

Of course, every footstep had to be cut with the adzes; and my blood ran colder still, as I saw the first guides creeping like flies upon its smooth glistening surface. The two Tairraz were in front of me, with the fore-part of the rope, and François Cachat, I think, behind. I scarcely know what our relative positions were, for we had not spoken much to one another for the last hour; every word was an exertion, and our attention was solely confined to our own progress. In spite of all my exertions, my confusion of ideas and extraordinary drowsiness increased to such a painful degree, that, clinging to the hand-holes made in the ice, and surrounded by all this horror, I do believe, if we had halted on our climb for half a minute, I should have gone off asleep. But there was no pause. We kept progressing, very slowly indeed, but still going on—and up so steep a path, that I had

to wait until the guide before me removed his foot before I could put my hand into the notch. I looked down below two or three times, but was not at all giddy, although the depth lost itself in a blue haze.

For upwards of half an hour we kept on slowly mounting this iceberg, until we reached the foot of the last ascent—the *calotte* as it is called—the "cap" of Mont Blanc. The danger was now over, but not the labour, for this dome of ice was difficult to mount. The axe was again in requisition; and everybody was so "blown," in common parlance, that we had to stop every three or four minutes. My young companions kept bravely on, like fine fellows as they were, getting ahead even of some of the guides; but I was perfectly done up. Honest Tairraz had no sinecure to pull me after him, for I was stumbling about as though completely intoxicated. I could not keep my eyes open, and planted my feet anywhere but in the right place. I know I was exceedingly cross. I have even a recollection of having scolded my "team," because they did not go quicker; and I was excessively indignant when one of them dared to call my attention to Monte Rosa. At last one or two went in front, and thus somewhat quickened our progress. Gradually our speed increased, until I was scrambling almost on my hands and knees; and then, as I found myself on a level, it suddenly stopped. I looked round, and saw there was nothing higher. The batons were stuck in the snow, and the guides were grouped about, some

lying down, and others standing in little parties. I was on the top of Mont Blanc!

The ardent wish of years was gratified; but I was so completely exhausted that, without looking round me, I fell down upon the snow, and was asleep in an instant. I never knew the charm before of that mysterious and brief repose which ancient people term "forty winks." Six or seven minutes of dead slumber was enough to restore the balance of my ideas; and when Tairraz awoke me, I was once more perfectly myself. And now I entered into the full delight that the consciousness of our success brougnt with it. It was a little time before I could look at anything steadily. I wanted the whole panorama condensed into one point; for gazing at Geneva and the Jura, I thought of the plains of Lombardy behind me; and turning round towards them, my eye immediately wandered away to the Oberland, with its hundred peaks glittering in the bright morning sun. There was too much to see, and yet not enough: I mean, the view was so vast that, whilst every point and valley was a matter of interest, and eagerly scanned, yet the elevation was so great that all detail was lost. What I did observe I will endeavour to render account of—not as a tourist might do who, planting himself in imagination on the Mont Blanc of Keller's map or Auldjo's plan, puts down all the points that he considers might be visible, but just as they struck me with an average traveller's notion of Switzerland.

In the first place, it must be understood, as I have just intimated, that the height greatly takes away from the interest of the view, which its expanse scarcely makes amends for. As a splendid panorama, the sight from the Rigi Kulm is more attractive. The checkered fields, the little steamer plying from Lucerne to Fluelyn, the tiny omnibuses on the lake-side road to Art, the desolation of Goldau, and the section of the fatal Rossberg, are all subjects of interest, and much admiration. But the Rigi is six thousand feet above the sea level, and Mont Blanc is over fifteen thousand. The little clustered village, seen from the Kulm, becomes a mere white speck from the crown of the monarch.

The morning was most lovely; there was not even a wreath of mist coming up from the valley. One of our guides had been up nine times, and he said he had never seen such weather. But with this extreme clearness of atmosphere there was a filmy look about the peaks, emerging into a perfect haze of distance in the valleys. All the great points in the neighbourhood of Chamouni—the Buet, the Aiguille Verte, the Col du Bonhomme, and even the Bernese Alps—were standing forth clear enough; but the other second-class mountains were mere ridges. It was some time before I could find out the Brevent at all, and many of the *aiguilles* were sunk and merged into the landscape. There was a strange feeling in looking down upon the summits of these mountains, which I had

been accustomed to know only as so many giants of the horizon. The other hills had sunk into perfect insignificance, or rather looked pretty much the same as they do in the relief models at the map-shops. The entire length of the Lake of Geneva, with the Jura beyond, was very clearly defined; and beyond these again were the faint blue hills of Burgundy. Turning round to the south-east, I looked down on the Jardin, along the same glacier by which the visitor to the Couvercle lets his eye travel to the summit of Mont Blanc. Right away over the Col du Géant we saw the plains of Lombardy very clearly, and one of the guides insisted upon pointing out Milan; but I could not acknowledge it. I was altogether more interested in finding out the peaks and gorges comparatively near the mountain, than straining my eyes after remote matters of doubt. Of the entire *coup d'œil* no descriptive power can convey the slightest notion. Both Mont Blanc and the Pyramids, viewed from below, have never been clearly pictured, from the utter absence of anything by which proportion could be fixed. From the same cause, it is next to impossible to describe the apparently boundless undulating expanse of jagged snow-topped peaks that stretched away as far as the horizon on all sides beneath us. Where everything is so almost incomprehensible in its magnitude, no sufficiently graphic comparison can be instituted.

The first curiosity satisfied, we produced our stores,

and collected together on the hard snow to discuss them. We had some wine, and a cold fowl or two, a small quantity of bread and cheese, some chocolate in *batons*, and a bag of prunes, which latter proved of great service in the ascent. One of these, rolled about in the mouth, without being eaten, served to dispel the dryness of the throat and palate, otherwise so distressing.

The rarefaction of the air was nothing to what I had anticipated. We had heard legends, down at Chamouni, of the impossibility of lighting pipes at this height; but now all the guides were smoking most comfortably. Our faces had an odd dark appearance, the result of congestion, and almost approaching the tint I had noticed in persons attacked by Asiatic cholera; but this was not accompanied by any sensation of fulness, or even inconvenience. The only thing that distressed me was the entire loss of feeling in my right hand, on which I had not been able to wear one of the fur gloves, from the bad grasp it allowed to my pole. Accordingly it was frost-bitten. The guides evidently looked upon this as a more serious matter than I did myself, and for five minutes I underwent a series of rather severe operations of very violent friction. After a while the numbness partially went away; but even as I now write, my little finger is without sensation, and on the approach of cold it becomes very painful. However, all this was nothing: we had succeeded, and were sitting all together, without

hurt or harm, on the summit of Mont Blanc. We did not feel much inclined to eat, but our *vin ordinaire* was perfect nectar; and the bottle of champagne brought up on purpose to be drunk on the summit was considered a finer wine than had ever been met with. We all shook each other by the hand, and laughed at such small pleasantries so heartily that it was quite diverting; and a rapid programme of toasts went round, of which the most warmly drunk was "Her," according to each of our separate opinions on that point. We made no "scientific observations,"—the acute and honest De Saussure had done everything that was wanted by the world of that kind; and those who have since worried themselves during the ascent about "elevations" and temperatures, have added nothing to what he told us sixty years ago. But we had beheld all the wonders and horrors of the glacier world in their wildest features; we had gazed on scenery of such fantastic yet magnificent nature as we might not hope to see again; we had laboured with all the nerve and energy we could command to achieve a work of downright unceasing danger and difficulty, which not more than one-half of those who try are able to accomplish, and the triumph of which is, even now, shared but by a comparative handful of travellers: and we had succeeded!

Although the cold was by no means severe when the air was still, yet, as I have before stated, the

lightest puff of wind appeared to freeze us; and we saw the guides getting their packs ready—they were very light now—and preparing to descend. Accordingly, we left the summit at half-past nine, having been there exactly half an hour. We learned afterwards that we had been seen from Chamouni by telescopes, and that the people there had fired cannon when they perceived us on the summit: but these we did not hear. We were about three hours and a half getting back to the Grands Mulets; and, with the exception of the Mur de la Côte (which required the same caution as in coming up), the descent was a matter of great amusement. Sliding, tumbling, and staggering about, setting all the zigzags at defiance, and making direct short cuts from one to the other—sitting down at the top of the snow-slopes, and launching ourselves off, feet first, until, not very clever at self-guidance, we turned right round and were stopped by our own heads: all this was capital fun. The guides managed to slide down very cleverly, keeping their feet. They leant rather back, steadying themselves with their poles, which also acted as a drag, by being pressed deeply into the snow when they wished to stop, and so scudded down like the bottles from the Grands Mulets. I tried this plan once, but before I had gone a dozen yards I went head-over-heels, and nearly lost my baton; so that I preferred the more ignoble but equally exciting mode of transit first alluded to.

Although our return to the Mulets was accomplished in about half the time of the ascent, yet I was astonished at the distance we had traversed, now that my attention was not so much taken away by the novelty of the scenery and situations. There appeared to be no end to the *montets* which divide the plateaux; and after a time, as we descended, the progress became very troublesome, for the snow was beginning to thaw in the sun, and we went up to our knees at every step. We were now not together—little parties of three or four dotting the glacier above and in front of us. Everybody chose his own route, and glissaded, or skated, or rolled down, according to his fancy. The sun was very bright and warm—we were all very cheerful and merry; and although I had not had any sleep for two nights, I contrived to keep up tolerably well with the foremost.

At one o'clock in the afternoon we got back to our old bivouac on the Grands Mulets. We had intended to have remained here some little time, but the heat on the rock was so stifling that we could scarcely support it; and Tairraz announced that the glacier was becoming so dangerous to traverse, from the melting of the snow, that even now it would be a matter of some risk to cross it. So we hastily finished our scraps of refreshment, and drank our last bottle of wine—out of a stew-pan, by the way, for we had lost our leathern cups in our evolutions on the ice—and then, making up our packs, bade

good-bye to the Grands Mulets, most probably for ever.

In five minutes we found that, after all, the greatest danger of the undertaking was to come. The whole surface of the Glacier des Bossons had melted into perfect sludge; the ice-cliffs were dripping in the sun, like the well at Knaresborough; every minute the bridges over the crevices were falling in; and we sank almost to our waists in the thawing snow at every step we took. I could see that the guides were uneasy. All the ropes came out again, and we were tied together in parties of three, about ten feet distant from one another. And now all the work of yesterday had to be gone over again, with much more danger attached to it. From the state of the snow, the guides avowed that it was impossible to tell whether we should find firm standing on any arch we arrived at, or go through it at once into some frightful chasm. They sounded every bridge we came to with their poles, and a shake of the head was always the signal for a *detour*. One or two of the tracks by which we had marched up yesterday had now disappeared altogether, and fresh ones had to be cautiously selected. We had one tolerably narrow escape. Tairraz, who preceded me, had jumped over a crevice, and upon the other side alighted on a mere bracket of snow, which directly gave way beneath him. With the squirrel-like rapid activity of the Chamouni guides, he whirled his baton round so as

to cross the crevice, which was not very broad but of unknown depth, transversely. This saved him, but the shock pulled me off my legs. Had he fallen, I must have followed him—since we were tied together—and the guide would have been dragged after me. I was more startled by this little accident than by any other occurrence during the journey.

At length, after much anxiety, we came to the *moraine* of the glacier, and I was not sorry to find myself standing upon a block of hard granite, for I honestly believe that our lives had not been worth a penny's purchase ever since we left the Grands Mulets. We had a long rest at the Pierre à l'Echelle, where we deposited our ladder for the next aspirants, and in the absence of everything else, were content with a little water for refreshment. The cords were now untied, and we went on as we pleased; but I ordered Jean Carrier to go ahead, and tell his pretty sweetheart at the Pavilion des Pelerins that we should make all the party drink her health there—a promise I had given a day or two previously—and he started off like a chamois. Jean Tairraz was sent forward to bespeak some milk for us at the Châlet de la Para, and then we took our time; and once more upon solid trustworthy ground, began the last descent. Some mules were waiting at the Châlet, but the road was so exceedingly steep and tortuous that I preferred my own legs; and by five o'clock we had come down the pine-wood, and found ourselves at the little cabin,

with Julie, all brightness and blushes, busying about to receive us.

Several ladies and gentlemen had come thus far to meet us; and what with the friends and families of the guides, we now formed a very large party indeed. It was here humbly suggested that we should mount our mules, to render our entry into Chamouni as imposing as possible; so after the men had drunk with their friends, and with one another, and indeed with everybody, we formed into our order of march across the fields between the two villages. First went the two Tairraz, Balmat, and Carrier, with their ice-axes, as the chiefs of the party, and specially attached to us; then we came on our mules; after us walked the body of the guides, with such of their families as had come to meet them, and little boys and girls, so proud to carry their batons, and appear to belong to the procession; and finally, the porters and volunteers with the knapsacks brought up the rear. And so we went merrily through the fields that border the Arve, in the bright afternoon sunlight, receiving little bouquets from the girls on the way, and meeting fresh visitors from Chamouni every minute.

We had heard the guns firing at Chamouni ever since we left the Pelerins; but as we entered the village we were greeted with a tremendous round of Alpine artillery from the roof of the new Hôtel Royal, and the garden and courtyard of the Hôtel de Londres. The whole population was in the streets, and on the

bridge; the ladies at the hotels waving their handkerchiefs, and the men cheering; and a harpist and a violin-player now joined the *cortège*. When we got into the court of our hotel, M. Edouard Tairraz had dressed a little table with some beautiful bouquets and wax candles, until it looked uncommonly like an altar, but for the half-dozen of champagne that formed a portion of its ornaments; and here we were invited to drink with him, and be gazed at and have our hands shaken by everybody. One or two enthusiastic tourists expected me there and then to tell them all about it; but the crowd was now so great, and the guns so noisy, and the heat and dust so oppressive, coupled with the state of excitement in which we all were, that I was not sorry to get away and hide in a comfortable warm bath which our worthy host had prepared already. This, with an entire change of clothes, and a quiet comfortable dinner, put me all right again; and at night, when I was standing in the balcony of my chamber window, looking at the twinkling pine illuminations on the bridge, and watching the last glow of sunset once more disappear from the summit of the grand old mountain king, I could hardly persuade myself that the whole affair had not been a wonderful dream.

I did not sleep very well when I went to bed. I was tumbling down precipices all night long, and so feverish that I drank off the entire contents of a large water-jug before morning. My face, in addition, gave

me some pain where the sun had caught it, otherwise I was perfectly well—sufficiently so, indeed, to get up tolerably early the next day and accompany a friend on foot to Montanvert. In the evening we gave the guides a supper in the hotel garden. I had the honour of presiding; and what with toasts, and speeches, and songs, excellent fare, and a warm-hearted company, the moon was once more on the summit of Mont Blanc before we parted. I know it will be some time before the remembrance of that happy evening passes away from those between whom and ourselves such an honest friendship had grown up as only fellow-labouring in difficulty and danger can establish.

The undertaking so long anticipated is all over, and I am sitting in a little top bedroom of the Couronne at Geneva, and settling the expenses with Jean Tairraz. The sunset, the glaciers, and the Mur de la Côte have come down to a matter of "little bills." He first gives me the hotel account after the ascent. It is as follows:—

NOTE NO. 2.

	Francs.	Cents.
103 bottles lost, ...	50	
18 breakfasts to guides, . . .	22	50
18 suppers to do., . . .	36	
6 bottles London porter, . . .	18	
	126	50

So it will be seen our racing with the bottles was not without some of the expense attached to that sport in general. But it was better to throw them away than to fatigue the men with the thankless task of carrying them down again. They were charged at a high rate, as everything else is at Chamouni; because it must be remembered, in such a wild secluded place, the transport becomes very expensive.

I next receive his own account:—

NOTE NO. 3.

	Francs.	Cents.
16 guides,	1600	
18 porters,	108	
3 mules,	18	
The boy,	4	
1 lantern broken,	1	75
Milk at the *châlet*,	1	50
Extra pay to porters,	5	
Expenses due to Julie at the Pavilion des Pelerins,	16	
Nails for shoes,	2	
	1756	25

Adding these together, we make—

	Francs.	Cents.
Provisions for ascent,	453	
Subsequent expenses,	126	50
Tairraz' guides' account,	1756	25
Total,	2335	75

This divided by four—the number of tourists—

gives about 584 francs each. Had I gone up alone, of course the expense would have been greater.

Not without vivid recollections of a delightful and wondrous journey, thus safely and happily accomplished, and of the excellent humour and courteous attention of my companions—with a recommendation, to all whose time and constitution will permit, to make the same excursion—is this plain narrative concluded.

SUMMER SPORT IN NOVA ZEMLA.

BY HERBERT SWIRE, R.N.

[*MAGA.* SEPTEMBER 1883.]

IN this over-populated kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with its still ever-increasing millions of human beings who must somewhere find shelter from the fickle elements, we see new settlements gradually springing up in formerly uninhabited places as the growing railroad system throws its iron web over the face of the land, whilst old villages near the lines rapidly assume the dimensions of towns, and towns develop themselves into cities. The widening circles of brick and mortar constantly encroach on the surrounding country, till the latter is no longer able to supply the towns with the necessaries of life in sufficient quantity; the result being that we are driven to procure from abroad that which we cannot produce for ourselves.

As in the case of the necessaries of life, so is it also with its luxuries, more especially, perhaps, with that which, once a necessity, has at length become one of

the luxuries most sought after and hardest to obtain —that, namely, of wild sport.

Tradition and history alike tell us that the ancient inhabitants of these islands were obliged to wage constant war against the denizens of the forests which then overspread the country, not only with the object of providing themselves with food and clothing, but also in self-defence. In this—from a sportsman's point of view—happy state of things, our forefathers were able to gratify the long-inherited instincts of man the hunter, whilst providing for their other wants. We, their descendants, inheriting all the old wants and a host of others which have sprung up with the advance of civilisation, have in no degree lost the old hunting instinct; but by increasing and multiplying at such a prodigious rate, we have lost the means of satisfying it in our native land. Even where game still runs wild, its pursuit is necessarily hedged in by endless formalities of law and etiquette; and the result is, that there is an annual and ever-increasing exodus of restless spirits, bent upon gratifying their hunting instincts in other lands after their own fashion.

Those who have become accustomed to wild sport abroad find it irksome to conform to the restrictions of modern British sport, and get into what are called loose habits. A case within my own knowledge occurs to me, in which an American, taking part in a grouse-drive on a Yorkshire moor, wounded one

of the beaters, and was looked upon as no sportsman in consequence. He certainly was careless, but as a sportsman he was probably the equal of any man present, for he was well accustomed to track and shoot game, with perhaps only one companion, in regions where there was no other human being within many miles; and so, forgetting that he was now surrounded by a host of guns and beaters, he made a mistake which might rather have been expected of a novice.

Those, then, who have once tasted the sweets of pursuing and killing game after their own fashion, are apt to prefer that kind of sport rather than what they can obtain in these islands, and consequently spread themselves over the world in search of it. Almost every known country on this planet annually resounds to the crack of the rifle of the British sportsman, or to the bang of his fowling-piece; and his twin brother the explorer still finds new hunting-grounds as the better known ones become used up. Amongst the least known and least frequented of all there is Nova Zemla, which has lately been mentioned a good deal in connection with the rescue of Mr Leigh Smith and his merry men, and is likely to be mentioned a good deal more in connection with future attempts to reach the North Pole.

Being far out of the way of all our merchant routes, and only approachable during the summer over the even then ice-encumbered sea, Nova Zemla

will probably long remain one of the last refuges of the reindeer; whilst its ice-choked fiords and frozen seas will still be haunted by the white whale, the seal, the walrus, and the polar bear.

Frequented, until of late, only by some dozen Russian schooners, who visit its shores every year, chiefly for white whale and salmon, and by a few roaming families of Samoyedes from the mainland, these arctic shores have hitherto afforded an undisturbed asylum during the winter to the game of all kinds, marine or terrestrial, which there abounds. Recently, however, the Russian Government have seen fit to plant a colony consisting of a few families of Samoyedes—it is supposed with the view of occupying the country in the Russian name—and these skilful hunters, of whom I shall have occasion to speak further on, harry the game throughout the year with great vigour. Beyond visits from European sportsmen or explorers, so rare that they might almost be counted on the fingers, no other human intruders ever invade these wild regions.

Having not long ago returned from this happy hunting-ground in the Hope, with the crew of the ill-fated Eira, I have obtained a glimpse of the country, which I hope will enable me to give an intelligible and not uninteresting account of what is to be seen and done there in the way of sport and adventure.

Till the present century the contour of the two

large islands which form what is now known as Nova Zemla was very differently represented upon the various manuscript charts in existence, these having been compiled from the observations of Dutch, Norwegian, and Russian navigators. Barents led off in 1598 with a chart representing the west coast and that part of the north-east coast which he had visited; this, though terribly out in longitude, was very good as to latitude; and since the days of this old explorer, his maps, with many additions and a few corrections, have been generally adhered to, some representing the north coast as taking an abrupt turn to the east, and thus continuing *ad infinitum*, the authors of these interesting documents veiling their perplexity by drawing a meridian line down the chart and thereby cutting it short, leaving the rest to the imagination of the beholder.

For our present knowledge of the shape and dimensions of the islands we are chiefly indebted to the Russian Government coast-survey, made during the early part of the present century, and continued by subsequent explorers, which is generally considered to be pretty accurate as far north as Admiralty Peninsula, the most prominent headland on the west coast of the north island. There is one remarkable exception, however: an error of nine miles has somehow crept into the latitude assigned to the centre of Möller Bay. To the northward of Admiralty Peninsula this survey also becomes rather wild,

and is not to be trusted. This of course means that the surveyors were here deterred from completing their work by ice and weather; and the remark applies equally to the east coast, which may be said to be ice-bound throughout the year, subject to occasional open states in favourable seasons. Cape Nassau, the point between Admiralty Peninsula and Cape Mauritius the north point, has traditionally acquired an evil reputation amongst the walrus-hunters, as being a sort of bewitched headland, to round which means to say farewell to the world; for it was believed that vessels were mysteriously drifted thence into the Arctic Ocean, beset by the ice, and never heard of again. That there is some foundation for this tradition, is proved by the fate of the Austrian Polar expedition of Weyprecht and Payer in the steamer Tegethoff, which was beset near this cape in the autumn of 1872 and never got free again, being drifted about the Arctic Ocean for two years, during which the expedition involuntarily discovered Franz-Josef Land, and only at last got free by abandoning their ship, and undertaking a most perilous and laborious journey over the ice with their boats, which lasted three months, when they had the good fortune to reach the shores of Nova Zemla, and to encounter a Russian schooner which was just leaving for home.

The Russian survey, then, gives us a very fair idea of the size and shape of the country. Lying between the parallels of 77° 35′ N. and 70° 40′ N.,

it will be seen that the curved direction of the two main islands covers a space of about 450 English miles, whilst their average breadth may be taken as 60 miles. The two islands are divided by a strait called Matotchkin Shar, which also well marks a central position in the physical configuration of the country; for it is in this locality that the highest mountains and wildest and most magnificent scenery are to be found, the land thence sinking to lower levels both to the northward and southward. Matotchkin Shar may likewise be said to be a central position as to the distribution of the various objects of sport; for it is on the slopes of the snow and glacier-clad mountains of this part of the country that reindeer are most plentiful, whilst wild-fowl of all kinds prefer the south island. Bears, walrus, and seals, on the other hand, may be looked for with greater confidence on the shores of the north island, and more particularly on the eastern and northern parts of it. I will not presume to narrate any adventures of my own in pursuit of polar bears; but if I could only remember half the yarns the old whalers of the Hope told me on this head, I could fill a book with wondrous tales, not to be surpassed even by the feats of the valiant Munchausen; of how they frequently fired into these ferocious quadrupeds volleys of marling-spikes, knives, and leaden slugs, not to speak of bullets, but that often the only effect of this rough treatment was that the monster "rubbed him-

self with snaw—yes, that he did—and went away geroulin', an' lookin' back." All the same, other travellers speak of this habit of polar bears rubbing themselves with snow when hurt. Another funny and perhaps equally useful habit of the bear, is that of swallowing large stones, for these may assist his digestion! but we cannot see what nourishment the bear which robbed a depot erected by one of the Franklin search expeditions could have derived from the whole stock of sticking-plaster which was found in his stomach. Modern sporting narratives always seem to me to lack the vigour and freshness of the productions of the earlier writers; and as we are on the subject of Nova Zemla bears, I cannot resist quoting, for the benefit of those of 'Maga's' readers who have not had the felicity of perusing "Purchas his Pilgrimes," an account of a thrilling bear adventure which occurred on the north island of Nova Zemla three hundred years ago, during the second voyage of William Barents.

"The 6th of September some of our men went on shore upon the firme land to seek for stones, which are a kind of diamond, whereof there are many also in the States Island; and while they were seeking the stones, two of our men lying together in one place, a great leane white beare came suddenly stealing out, and caught one of them fast by the necke; who, not knowing what it was that tooke him by the necke, cryed out and sayed, 'Who is it that pulls me

so by the necke?' Wherewith the other that lay not farre from him lifted up his head to see who it was; and perceiving it to be a monstrous beare, cryed out and sayed, 'Oh mate! it is a beare;' and therewith presently rose up and ran away. The beare at the first falling upon the man bit his head in sunder, and suckt out his blood; wherewith the rest of the men that were on the land, being about twenty in number, ranne presently thither, either to save the man, or else to drive the beare from the body; and having charged their pieces, and bent their pikes, set upon her, that still was devouring the man; but perceiving them to come towards her, fiercely and cruelly ranne at them and got another of them out from the company, which she tore in pieces, wherewith all the rest ran away. We, perceiving out of our ship and pinnasse that our men ranne to the sea-side to save themselves, with all speed entered into their boats and rowed as fast as we could to relieve our men. Where, being on land, we beheld the cruell spectacle of our two dead men that had been so cruelly killed and torne in pieces by the beare. We, seeing that, encouraged our men to goe back again with us, and with pieces, curtel-axes, and halfe-pikes, to set upon the beare; but they would not all agree thereunto, some of them saying 'Our men are already dead, and we shall get the beare well enough though we oppose ourselves into so open danger. If we might save our fellowes' lives, then we would make haste; but now we need not

make such speed, but take her at an advantage, for we have to doe with a cruell, fierce, and ravenous beast.' Whereupon three of our men went forward, the beare still devouring her prey, not once fearing the number of our men, and yet they were thirtie at the least. The three that went forward in that sort were Cornelius Jacobson, William Geysen, and Hans Van Miflen, William Barentz' purser; and after that the sayd master and pylat had shot three times, and mist, the purser, stepping somewhat further forward, and seeing the beare to be within the length of a shot, presently levelled his piece, and discharging it at the beare, shot her into the head, between the eyes, and yet she held the man still fast by the necke, and lifted up her head with the man in her mouth; but she began somewhat to stagger, wherewith the purser and a Scottish man drew out their curtel-axes and strooke at her so hard that their curtel-axes burst, and yet she would not leave the man. At last William Geysen went to them, and with all his might strook the beare upon the snout with his piece, at which the beare fell to the ground, making a great noise, and William Geysen, leaping upon her, cut her throat."

This graphically described tragedy is unique of its kind, so far as I know; for though a man here and there may have been killed at long intervals of time, yet this sometimes fierce, but always eccentric animal is not, as a rule, looked upon with much fear. He is so easily duped into approaching quite close to the

hunter, who, if he only remains calm and is able to hit a haystack at a hundred yards, may then slay him with a single bullet.

Bears not only feed upon seals, walrus, large stones, and sticking-plaster, but also have a weakness for any vegetable substance which they may come across, such as sea-weed, grass, lichens, &c.; they are in fact, like pigs and men, omnivorous, and are of such an inquisitive nature moreover, that in search of food, or out of mere "cussedness," they will examine and scatter depots—so that in laying down such a store, upon the existence of which the lives of the members of an expedition may afterwards depend, this contingency must be foreseen and guarded against. Their sense of smell is, however, so acute, that it is found difficult to hide anything from the creatures. Generally a cairn of stones is erected, in which a record is placed, enclosed in a tin casing or glass bottle, directing the finder to some spot not far off, on a certain bearing; then when Bruin appears on the scene, snuffing and shuffling about the cairn, he will probably pull most of it down, carefully examining each stone, as a modern *savant* might an Egyptian tablet. He will most likely return often to the cairn, to see if it moves perhaps—or who knows for what ill-defined reason flitting and glimmering through his half-awakened brain?—and most likely his friends will come with him; but probably they will be so absorbed by the cairn, that if only they will not carry

off the record no great harm will be done. The finder of the record then goes to the spot indicated, and deep beneath the snow we hope finds the depot intact.

The chase of the reindeer is not attended with precisely the same kind of excitement which arises from that of the polar bear, but is in its way quite as enjoyable, leading the hunter, as it does, to penetrate into the more remote valleys towards the interior of the islands, and that in their most picturesque part. The mountains about Matotchkin Shar attain a height of between 3000 and 4000 feet, the upper portions being clad with eternal snow, which descends in small glaciers into the heads of the valleys. There is a tradition that an active volcano exists somewhere in these parts; but though I several times ascended the highest mountains in the neighbourhood on purpose to look for it, I could never see either the volcano or any traces of it. I remember that a similar tradition exists amongst the sea-elephant hunters of Kerguelen Island, in the Antarctic Ocean, as to the existence of a like phenomenon in the south-west or most inaccessible corner of that great island, and imagine that these stories are but remnants of the old fancies of long ago, when any unknown region used to be peopled with dragons, goblins, giants, and what not.

On a fine, warm, sunshiny day, nothing is more enjoyable than to start off in the early morning, when

the sun is still skirting the northern horizon, and with rifle on shoulder to cautiously ascend some commanding eminence whence a telescope may be brought to bear on the most likely pastures on the slopes of the mountains. The keen morning air, the blue sky, the crisp snow crunching under one's feet as ever and anon great drifts have to be crossed, with the sweet scent from the arctic flowers nestling in the sheltered spots, and the twittering warble of snow-buntings, all add to the delights of the hunter's heart as he gradually ascends to his chosen position. When at length there, I, for my part, have often been more inclined to rest for an hour and enjoy the splendid scene, and even to smoke, than to go straight on. Look! there lies the winding strait — Matotchkin Shar—its sinuosities gradually fading in the distance till the sharp shoulder of yonder black mountain with the little glacier shining above it cuts off the view along the glassy surface. Mark how the bay ice is streaming out from that great gulf on the opposite side; that is Silver Bay, whose sloping shores afford the finest pastures to our quarry. But we need not look there for them, for the strait separates it from us, and we have sent our boat back to the ship. And there, further to the left, lies Mitucheff Island basking in the sun, with the dark-coloured cairns erected by the Russian surveyors sixty years ago standing out clear against a background of snow on the mainland beyond. Two miles out to sea from that island

lies a treacherous shoal, on which now no ocean swell nor even a grounded floe-berg marks the danger which lurks below. That is the shoal which knocked off the Hope's false keel and sprang her sternpost; and who knows what other mischief it might not have done had not the friction of countless floe-bergs ground its surface smooth as a board? Further still to the left lies the broad expanse of the Arctic Ocean, looking as if it never could become the solid block of ice which it will be in a few short weeks. And there, below, lies the river through whose icy cold waters we have so lately waded, and from which this evening we hope to see some salmon pulled forth. But looking at that river reminds us that we are wet, and that our feet are getting cold; so knock out the pipes, and on after the reindeer. The chase of the reindeer is as the stalking of the Highland stag, with the additional charms of an absolute freedom of action. Go where you will—do as you please. There is no law here but your own pleasure, and you may kill as many deer as your skill and perseverance will allow of. It is rather hard, though, to have to practise abstention so rigorously when a flock of some fifty geese gets up suddenly as we make for a slope on which we have observed a small herd of five deer quietly browsing. How well a roast goose would look on our mess-table to-night, and how much better he would taste than stewed looms and salt horse!

It is not always entertaining to read the chronicle

of the death of defenceless animals. I will instead narrate the adventures of a Scottish harpooner, Andrew by name, who one day went a-hunting. He did not profess to be going a-hunting, but asked leave to go ashore to the river's mouth, and there wash his clothes. This is a privilege which is dear to the heart of the hardy tar; he delights in washing his clothes and messing about with soap-suds. Our harpooner, however, was a very Ulysses,—a man of many devices—a cunning man, with an eye to possibilities,—so he privily took with him a rifle and some cartridges, and with some kindred spirits repaired to the river's bank. The party had not been long engaged in their pursuit when Andrew was 'ware of a fine stag looking curiously at him over the brow of the bank. Cautiously he puts down his pipe, cautiously he takes up his rifle, and levels it at the inquisitive beast. He pulls the trigger—bang!—the deer falls, and the echoes ring out a volley against the hills, as the washing-party, taking in the situation, spring forward with a yell, like the Highlanders at Tel-el-Kebir, to breast the slope and be at the enemy. Andrew drops his rifle, and seizes a stick—for is it not more like his harpoon than a rifle?—and advances steadily to finish off his prey. Soon he reaches the prostrate deer, and straightway delivers a blow calculated to quicken the dead—a calculation, alas! but too well founded, for the deer forthwith rises up and makes off like the wind, the party standing

aghast at the phenomenon. "Oh that I had been writ down an ass!" Andrew might have exclaimed with Dogberry, reloaded his rifle, and secured his deer. But now the abuse he levelled at that departing animal far surpassed the terms in which Shakespeare's beadle reproaches Borachio and Conrade.

The Russian walrus-hunters whom we found at Matotchkin Shar had done very well with the reindeer; and we, seeing that they had plenty of venison hanging in their rigging, asked where they got it, when they directed us to the other end of the strait, about fifty miles away. Next day it transpired that the strait was still choked by ice up to within six miles of where we lay. Such are the wiles by which sportsmen strive to deceive even one another.

Amongst the most exciting of the sports in which a summer visitor to Nova Zemla may take part is the capture of the beluga, or white whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*), whose skin supplies us with the so-called porpoise-hide, of which shooting-boots are now so generally made. The white whale fishery is carried on in Nova Zemla by the Russian schooners, the gain which may be expected from this pursuit being the attraction which chiefly draws them to these seas. This being the case, it behoves the amateur whaler not to interfere with the fishery, unless at the invitation of the men whose livelihood depends upon their success, or endless difficulties will ensue. There is even a story that the whole crew of a Norwegian

smack were, not long ago, treacherously murdered by Russian whale-hunters, who had found them trespassing upon what they considered their preserves. Such deeds are not uncommon in remote regions like this, where there is no fear of detection, save through the promptings to confess of some guilty conscience. The schooners make the white whale the main object of their voyage, taking, as occasion may offer, bears, seals, walrus, and reindeer; and finally, in September, just at the close of the season, they repair to the mouth of some river, and there net the ascending salmon, leaving for home as soon as the ice begins to show signs of closing in. Often parties are sent away from the schooners in boats to some distant spot, where they can be getting the salmon and reindeer, &c., ready to embark as soon as their ship comes round. In this manner a party of Russian seamen were left behind a year or two ago, and we found them living with the Samoyedes at Karmakula. The ice having closed in earlier than was expected, their ship had to leave; and they were thus left to their own devices. After great hardships and privations had been endured, they set off to walk some sixty miles to the Samoyede settlement, over the freshly fallen snow on the land, and the hummocky ice of the fiords—and met with adventures which it would need an article to themselves to describe adequately—at last reaching the summer-tents at Karmakula, under the warm reindeer-skin folds of which,

and in their wooden huts, they were hospitably entertained during the long winter by their kind-hearted little hosts. The crew of another Russian schooner was left to winter on the south part of Nova Zemla by their vessel being beset during a gale, and carried bodily away to sea, whilst they were all on shore; and these men were also well looked after by the Samoyedes. Some few of the schooners devote themselves almost entirely to walrus, seals, and bears; and these either go very far north, following the retreating pack till driven south again, or else keep round on the east coast altogether, which being generally in great measure frozen up all the year round, is the best place to find the game they are in search of.

If one really wishes to take part in a white whale hunt, it is necessary to have either a properly fitted whale-boat, or a walrus-boat, so that when the whale has been struck, his runs, plunges, and sharp doublings may not either capsize or swamp it. The Russian schooners at anchor in some sheltered bay always keep a party of men on the look-out on some elevated place near, where they constantly remain till relieved by others from their ships. They generally build a hut of drift-wood and stones, or pitch a tent near their look-out place, or else they would have a bad time of it when the keen wind blows strong, and during the cold nights when the sun sets low down towards the horizon.

My first acquaintance with the white whale in the flesh was made on the "snow-foot" at the base of the cliffs below the Samoyede settlement at the head of Karmakula harbour, having previously encountered by the hundred their mouldering skeletons scattered along the beach in various parts of the island, picked remarkably clean by the burgomaster or glaucus gull, that greedy scavenger of the arctic regions. On the stretch of snow-ice in question there were ranged the bodies of half-a-dozen white whales, varying from six to sixteen feet in length; the young ones being of a brown colour, and the adults white, which was seen to be tinged with yellow by contrast with the snow on which they lay. Their very fine dolphin-like lines are well depicted in many works on natural history, the great peculiarity of their appearance being given by the odd profile of the concave forehead, which ends in a projecting upper lip or jaw; thence the mouth takes an upward direction, whilst the chin slopes quickly off to the under surface of the body. The diminutive eye adds the finishing-touch to a countenance expressive of that silliness and indecision of character which is amply exemplified by the behaviour of the creature when beset by the hunters. Hearing a snarling sound behind one of the carcasses, I went up to discover the cause, and was surprised to see a young polar bear making off with a large piece of offal in his mouth, and smeared from head to foot with gore, grumbling loudly to himself as he shambled

off at having been disturbed at his meal. We afterwards came upon this bear having his dessert in the Samoyede cooking tent, surrounded by a group of admiring and envious Esquimaux dogs, with whom he appeared to be a great favourite on the whole. Having finished his food, and then licked one of the dogs from head to foot—perhaps by way of cleaning his tongue—he adjourned to the Samoyede living tent, where he speedily settled down amongst the children and furs, and went peacefully to sleep.

We had long wanted to see some white whale captured, and were often startled by great excitement amongst the schooners whenever the preconcerted signal was made from the look-out station indicating that the "fish" were approaching; but as yet the whales had never actually come within the limits of the bay. At length our chance came. A day or two before the Hope left Karmakula the signal was made from the look-out station, and soon it was seen from the schooners that the whales had actually passed the outer headlands. Instantly all was excitement and bustle on board the schooners to get the boats away with the least possible delay, the men working at their hasty preparations with a suppressed excitement which was highly infectious. Some of us happened at the time to be returning to the ship from a duck-shooting expedition, so we followed the Russian boats as hard as we could, finding it difficult in our little dingy to keep any-

where near the large walrus-boats propelled by the strong arms of their excited crews. Following them towards the entrance of the harbour, we arrived some time after they had got to work, and found that they had, by careful driving, succeeded in forcing the whales into a bight on the north side of the anchorage, and were now hastily spreading a large strong net across the entrance to it. The net was only ten feet deep, floating by means of wooden chocks, so that its upper edge came within a few feet of the surface. The depth of the water being many fathoms more than that of the net, we now made sure that the whales would easily escape underneath them, and watched the proceedings with keen interest, joining in the sport as occasion offered, by pulling towards any point where we perceived that assistance was needed. No sooner was the net stretched across than we saw occasional jets of feathery spray, and then white-looking objects turning leisurely over in the water. I had seen these white objects vaguely for some time; but so slowly did they turn, and so similar were they in colour to the many blocks of floating ice, that it was some time before I realised the fact that these were the whales. The boats now again began driving the whales towards an indentation in the coast of the small bight which they had already guarded by the net, beating on the gunwales with stretchers or oars, and pulling lustily towards any point which seemed

to be threatened with a sortie from the enclosed prey, which were so easily turned by these means that in a very short space of time they were nearly all got together in the desired place, and a second net promptly run out from shore to shore. The whales between the two nets were now almost disregarded, a single boat only, assisted by us in our dingy, being left to see that they did not get through any possibly unguarded spots, and the attention of the rest of the boats was turned exclusively towards those within the last net laid out. This net, like the first, was a very long way indeed from being on the bottom, and why the whales did not "sound" and pass out beneath them both, is not apparent. It can only be supposed that their custom is to keep always near the surface, and perhaps they are not blessed with the keenest of vision, as their small eyes seem to indicate; at any rate, unless they are very stupid, very blind, or very frightened, or perhaps all three combined, one would naturally suppose that they would escape as a matter of course. Not so, however; for presently a whale gets entangled in the net, straining and struggling till one would think the whole fabric would burst—beating the sea into foam, as ever and anon he throws his great tail and shiny white back out of the water. A boat swiftly approaches, the bowman standing with weapon poised in both hands, ready for a throw; and watching his opportunity, as the snowy back again emerges from

the waves, the skilful harpooneer buries the barbed point deep in the victim's flesh. A mighty plunge, a billow of foam, and a crimson stain upon the water, shows that the weapon has struck home. The harpooneer pulls out the wooden shaft as the oarsmen back astern, and the barb is left embedded. By means of the attached line the poor beast is slowly but surely pulled to the surface; his struggles become gradually fainter as, drowning and bleeding, he receives the fatal lunges with the lance which the harpooneer is now administering, striking through the back of his head into the brain. Spouts of blood have now taken the place of the feathery clouds he was so sportively throwing up but a short time ago; and as he lies wallowing in his gore, he is disentangled from the net, lashed underneath the stern of the boat, and towed on shore, where he is secured by a rope and grapnel, and left for the present. Not all the whales are killed thus, however. Many keep quite clear of the net, and have to be harpooned in the ordinary way, when the finest sport is afforded — the sharp doublings of the stricken animal testing to the utmost the strength and stability of the best-built boat. Sir Henry Gore-Booth—who will, I hope, forgive me for recording his prowess—himself harpooned and killed three at least in the open, having pulled up, directly he saw what was going on, in his walrus-boat, which he had brought with him in his little ketch, the Kava. This keen

sportsman was ever to the front when large game were to be got at, and seldom missed a kill when a chance offered. On that day no less than twenty-five white whale succumbed to the harpoons of the Russians, who were hugely delighted at their good fortune, and celebrated the occasion with uproarious mirth that night on board their schooners.

No article professing to treat of sport in Nova Zemla would be complete without some mention of the walrus—or, as it is often called, the sea-horse—though this animal has now become so rare in the more easily accessible parts of the coast that we only saw two the whole time we were in Nova Zemla. As the walrus yields a by no means insignificant trophy in its pair of tusks of splendid ivory, and is, moreover, not particularly easy to kill, of course it must always be one of the objects of the chase to the adventurous visitor. I am sorry not to be able to give any precise account, from actual experience, of the method in which the walrus is captured; but those who take an interest in the subject cannot do better than refer for instructions (!) to the works of Albertus Magnus, who died in 1280 A.D., and who has left some account of the matter. Not having the work at hand, I am not able to quote what cannot but be a spicy narrative in the original; but the account is alluded to in Nordenskiöld's 'Voyage of the Vega,' in which a woodcut, reproduced from Olaus Magnus (1555), illustrates the text. From this it

appears that the walrus is only to be taken by the exercise of much circumspection on the part of the hunter; for he must not approach the animal till he encounters it hanging asleep, suspended by its tusks from a cleft in the rocks! Cutting two parallel slits in the animal's back, and raising the intervening strip of hide, the hunter passes underneath it a stout rope, which he secures to its own part with two half hitches—the other end being then made fast to trees, posts, or large iron rings in the rocks (these conveniences being, of course, common in the arctic regions). The sketch, however, represents the hunters seated in their boat and pulling vigorously at the rope, which is fastened to the walrus in the manner described. The writer then goes on to describe the next step—which is to awaken the animal by throwing large stones at his head, which being done, he is so startled into desperate efforts to escape, that he jumps clean out of his skin, leaving it behind him hanging to the rocks! He, however, cannot live without his skin, and soon after perishes or is thrown up half dead on the beach. I have not myself had an opportunity of trying this method of capturing the sea-horse, or rather his skin; but should it ever be put in practice by modern hunters, it would be highly interesting to read of it.

The kind of sport of which the visitor may always make most sure, is wild-fowl shooting. In the first place, if he intends afterwards to take his vessel into

regions where walrus, seals, and bears abound, he must, of course, be prepared for any emergency in the way of being beset or crushed by the ice, and having to winter. He will therefore at once commence laying in a stock of looms (Brünnich's guillemot), which are excellent eating, very abundant in summer, and afford, at any rate, as good sport as pigeon-shooting. They build, or rather lay their eggs, on ledges along the steep face of any cliff which they may select for their loomery, where they congregate in incredible numbers and hatch their young in company. When the young birds are old enough, the parents carry them down to the water—if report is to be believed—and teach them to swim; and when they can do that, they are taught to fly, and then the whole colony migrates south. As we had to prepare for a possible winter in Franz-Josef Land, loom-shooting was commenced even before we had sighted Nova Zemla, and when we got to Karmakula we went at it with a will. Convenient slabs of floating bay-ice were being carried slowly along the base of the cliff which we decided to attack, and on one of these we took our stand, shooting the birds as they flew over our heads, our boat picking them up as they fell into the water. One of my birds fell close to the edge of the piece of ice on which we were standing, and, jumping forward to secure it before it could wriggle itself under the ice, I cracked off a great lump and floundered into the just freezing water. I

after the main flock had risen from the pool and flown away, a number still remained behind, and instead of flying, dived and remained a long time under water. They are very quick in diving, often disappearing the instant they see the flash from the gun, and thus avoiding the charge of shot. Those that I got were not of full plumage; they had neither the wing feathers nor those of the tail fully grown; hence I conclude that they were young birds bred on the pond. These teal when full grown are distinguished by long slender tail-feathers, which are conspicuous as they fly. I lost one of those I shot, thanks to my clumsy friend before alluded to, who insisted upon leaving it in the middle of the pool where it fell, and going on to another place, saying that the bird would have drifted ashore by the time we returned. Knowing that no well-argued proof is so convincing as practical demonstration, I determined to convince my impetuous friend that he was wrong, and went on with him, calling his attention at the same time to the burgomaster gulls perched on distant points, and taking the precaution to bury the birds which I had already secured deep in the snow. On returning an hour afterwards we exhumed our birds, and my friend commenced to look for the teal, which he expected to find upon the shore; but it was not there, and finally was discovered on the rocks above, half devoured by the voracious burgomasters, who had made off directly we came in sight.

There are plenty of geese and swans in the region about Goose Land, but they do not seem to frequent the neighbourhood of Karmakula much; perhaps, being shier birds than the eider-ducks, they have been frightened away by the Samoyedes from the settlement. Eider-duck are very fond of basking in the sun on the surface of a piece of floating ice; and frequently, when returning to the ship after a day's shooting, we materially added to our bag by just running the boat past such a floe, and firing a volley into the flock as it rose. It is always well to have a cartridge ready in the arctic regions, for one never knows what may turn up at any moment.

Concerning the Samoyedes, much information was collected by Professor Nordenskiöld during his voyage along the north coasts of Europe and Asia, from the North Sea to the Pacific. As these little people may prove to be of great use to the sportsman or the explorer, it may perhaps not be out of place here to repeat some particulars as to their mode of life.

We encountered some half-dozen families at Karmakula, where, as I have previously mentioned, they have been settled under the auspices of the Russian Government, in wooden houses, which they inhabit during the winter — many of them moving in the spring, by means of dog-sledges and boats, to other parts of the country where they may more successfully pursue their occupations of fishing and hunting. Occasional parties of Samoyedes also visit Nova

Zemla from the mainland for summer hunting, returning as they came when the winter closes in. Stray families may sometimes winter in Nova Zemla in other places beside Karmakula — and indeed I know that a family has lived for several years past on the west coast of Goose Land; but these cannot be called permanent settlements, and a castaway crew could not depend upon finding them.

The Samoyedes do not as yet appear to have been to any extent converted to Christianity, their religion being a worship of rudely executed idols. "The worst and the most unartificiall worke that ever I saw," says Stephen Burrough, in 1556; and goes on to say, "some of their idols were an old sticke with two or three notches made with a knife in it." Most of them are better than that, however, "in the shape of men, women, and children very grossly wrought;" and to these they offer sacrifice of various animals, smearing the notches, which represent the mouths of their gods, with the blood of the victims. The Olympus of the Samoyede deities appears to be Vaygats Island, between Nova Zemla and the mainland, where large plantations of those divinities are stuck in the ground. As to the sacrifices, Stephen Burrough remarks: "There was one of their sleds broken and lay by the heape of idols, and there I saw a deeres skinne, which the foules had spoyled: and before certaine of their idols blocks were made as high as their mouthes, being all bloody; I thought

that to be the table whereon they offered their sacrifices," &c. From Nordenskiöld's observations we learn that this all holds good at the present day; and that they also carry small idols about with them in their sledges, which are drawn either by dogs or reindeer. Those whom we encountered in Nova Zemla had no reindeer but only sledge-dogs, with which they were well supplied — so well, that they sold us six for our use in Franz-Josef Land, if we had wintered there. It is difficult to say whether they worship the idols as actual gods in themselves, or only do them homage as representing something beyond. Professor Nordenskiöld remarks that the Russians whom he found living with the Samoyedes south of Vaygats Island were of opinion that there was no material difference between the Samoyede "bolvan" or idol, and their own holy pictures and charms.

The Samoyedes, except in rare instances, are always represented as being friendly to Europeans. Those we encountered at Karmakula were uniformly civil and obliging, anxious to barter their furs and skins at moderate prices, and always ready to let us have rides in their dog-sledges along the snow-foot at the base of the cliffs. When we arrived, many of them came on board at once, dressed in their finest skins and coloured cotton cloths,—the headman coming in a separate boat, in the middle of which he sat cross-legged, whilst the paddles were plied by two of the

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tribe. They thought we had on board the Russian officer who pays them an annual visit, and were anxious to pay their respects to him without delay. One old man was very much struck with the huge Newfoundland dog belonging to the ship; a beast so fat and unwieldy that he had a difficulty in walking, especially at this time, as he had just before swallowed two loom-skins — feathers, beak, and all. The old man wished to buy the dog, and pulled out a heap of silver as a first bid, adding to it gradually till he had spread out all his money, which amounted to about an English pound, and finally throwing a couple of his own dogs in; nor would he desist till with great difficulty he was made to understand that the dog did not belong to any individual but to the ship, and that he might just as well try to buy the mainmast.

In concluding this notice of the sporting aspects of a visit to Nova Zemla, undertaken with far different objects, I can only hope that this country, much of whose coast, and nearly the whole of whose interior, is still unexplored, may be more often visited by our countrymen; for the better it is known the greater will be its value as a base for an arctic expedition by way of Franz-Josef Land, which, when undertaken, promises to yield a success which has not as yet rewarded the efforts to attain a very high latitude by other routes. By familiarity with this land and its surrounding seas, we should gain a knowledge of the movements of the ice from year to year, which

would be the more complete in proportion to the number of vessels employed, and the more valuable in proportion to its completeness and continuity. At present it appears that from July till the end of September are, as a rule, the ordinary limits of the navigable season, which may be extended or contracted according as the season is favourable or otherwise. The establishment of fixed winter meteorological stations in various parts of the arctic lands will be a distinct step in advance in polar exploration, and will perhaps yield more valuable scientific results than even the attainment of the Pole itself. Apart, however, from scientific considerations, as long as that portion of the earth's surface remains unvisited, human nature is such that human beings will always be found eager to be the first to plant a flag there; and that that flag should be any other than the Union-jack, heaven forbid!

A RIDE TO MAGNESIA.

[*MAGA.* February–March 1847.]

STAGE FIRST.

SMYRNA is a capital starting-point for Eastern expeditions, though it is too full of *giaours* of every description to be, in itself, a fair specimen of orientalism. The man would carry home a queer account of Turkey who should begin his notes at Smyrna, and, passing up the Dardanelles, make up his book as he travelled overland from Constantinople to Jannina, *en route* to Tower Stairs. This is the approved track, or perhaps it may be up the Danube in the Austrian steamer. Such an expedition is capital fun no doubt, and to be recommended to any of our friends with a little loose cash and some six weeks' holiday. It introduces to many notabilities, first-rate in their way, but not to that singular notability, the genuine old Osmanli. He is a branch of the ethnographical tree that will not

flourish in European atmosphere; though the same exuberance of vigour that first sent forth the mighty shoot from Central Asia, has prevailed to pass through the feeble defences of the West. It is as an overgrown weakling that he exists in our quarter of the world. His eyes are without fire, his manners without the stamp of originality. He succumbs beneath the presence of the Frank,—the hated and despised, and yet the feared and the envied. The better feelings of his nature suffer from the constant presence of those whose superiority he is forced to admire, but whose personal character he naturally detests. Such conflict of feeling cannot but be with detriment to the spirit which, so fettered, refuses the generous offices of brotherhood, and yields the debt of civility only from policy or by constraint. How different is this man in his proper country! where the usages and language and ideas are unmixedly those which have been his father's before him; where the leading idea of *giaours* is that they are infidel dogs, who eat pork and are unenlightened of Islam; and where every one firmly believes that the whole set of Franks are allowed to occupy and rule only by the clemency of their high and mighty lord the Padishah! Here the Turk may condescend, and here he can be truly generous and hospitable. The Frank comes as a wanderer from his own remote settlement (somewhere or other at the world's end), to see the lords of the earth, the true believers. He

is a poor ignorant stranger who cannot speak a word of intelligible language. It is kind, and gratifying to self-esteem, to receive such an one, and show him those good things that shall make him sigh to return to his own forlorn fatherland. Besides all this, the outward modifications affecting the European Turk spoil his nationality. The reforms of Mahmoud and of Abdul Medjid have wofully cut up the appearance of their subjects; and of course sumptuary changes such as these affect especially those who mix with the world, and are near court. Who can believe in the ill-looking fellow with smooth face, regular built boots, and tight frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin,—to say nothing of the wretched red cap he wears instead of a turban? That a Turk!—pshaw!

When I landed at that nest of pirates, Valona,—what time we bore a message to the respectable inhabitants, that unless they took a little more pains to grow honest, we should be under certain painful necessities with respect to them, — was I to look upon that wretched rabble as Turks? Men dressed in every variety of shabby frock-coat and trousers; and above all, men who were undisguised in the exhibition of vulgar curiosity. What amount of excitement would it take to make a genuine Turk open the eyes of astonishment? or, should he even be betrayed into an unguarded Mashhallah! has the power of morbid attraction been discovered which

may draw him from his seat and lead him to any effort of inquiry? When, then, I saw these people flocking together on their jetty to meet us, I at once recognised them as mongrel and degenerated. They were queer fellows in their way too, quite worthy of observation. The whole community are piratical; the youth practically, the seniors by counsel. They manage their evil deeds with a singleness of purpose that neglects no feasible opportunity, and with a caution that restrains from doubtful attempts, and almost secures them from capture. They are not like the pirates of the nautical novels, who embark in a seagoing ship, and stand by to fight it out with any cruisers they may meet. Like cautious sportsmen, they mark down their prey first, and do not waste powder and shot. In a breeze there is no danger on their coast. But woe betideth the *trabaccalo* or short-handed merchantman that may happen to be becalmed in their sight. Incontinent they launch their boats,—terrible vessels that hold twenty or thirty armed men besides the rowers, and cleave their irresistible course towards the motionless and defenceless victim. On such occasions it is only by rare hap that any individual survives to tell the tale and cry for vengeance. And how shall this cry be satisfied? The bloody work is no sooner over than its traces are obliterated and the community restored to the appearance of inoffensiveness: the boats are pulled up on shore, the crews dispersed. Should an avenger

arrive on the spot, he finds the miserable huts either deserted or tenanted by women and old men. How can these be made to suffer for other men's offences, or forced to give information which they declare themselves not to possess?

The same dissatisfaction must be confessed with Previsa Salonica, that place of steady disrespectability, which has maintained its bad character since the apostolic days, and even with Constantinople. This last is a gem of the earth, but its beauties are to a great extent those of civilised elaboration. Courtiers form but one species, and breathe pretty much the same atmosphere throughout the world. He who has studied them throughout the world has marked only the circumstantial differences of locality producing their effect on a spring of action, itself one and constant. To search out and know this principle it may be useful to visit foreign courts; but Man, beyond the exhibition of this one phase of character, does not flourish in such places. If the best place of observation be not actually the wilderness, because that too is as extensive, calling forth necessarily particular energies, and exhibiting to a great extent one effect, we may take favourable ground somewhere midway between the extremes. It is to the heart and centre of a country that we should go for the vigorous current of its life. Here the colour is vivid, the speciality preserved, the family features of our brethren distinguishable.

I suppose it was some such profound rumination as this that suggested to my two friends and myself the idea of the cruise hereinafter to be recorded. All three were right travel-smitten, a state of mind which marvellously thrives on slight nourishment. We had had substantial food in this way, and were proportionately vigorous in enterprise. We had seen at odd times a good deal of our friends the Turks, but it had been chiefly of the vagabonds near the coast. Into all sorts of queer creeks and corners had we found our way in boat expeditions, that most capital mode of adventure, though rather ticklish for those who are not pretty strong in numbers. So had we dug into the sinuosities of Greece, of which both eastern and western borders were familiar to us; and it is not a little that I would take for my Horace, which I bore with me up the Ambracian Gulf, and which bears over the "*nunc est bibendum*" the note of my personal presence off Actium. Pleasant, too, are the recollections of our visit to Nicopolis, the mighty monument of this victory, now serving, as all things earthly must one day serve, to display the victory of time. We were forced to walk on this occasion, as to have touched a saddle or animal would have exposed us to the penalties of quarantine. Our good friend Achmet walked before with a long stick, booming the people off, who shrank from our contact right and left, as if we had been the lords of the soil, or as if it had been *they*, instead of us, who had to fear the

plague-compromising touch. And then when we returned hungry as hunters from our march, full of ready forgiveness for any faults of cookery, what a banquet was that which consular hospitality had prepared! Oh the jocosity of that breakfast, which was in the open air, because we could not go into the house, where we could take nothing from, and could give nothing to, the ladies, but had to keep them at most respectful distance, and be civil under the control of a vigilant *guardiano*.

There is no mode of travelling which can possibly be compared to this boat-work. The scope of such proceeding is certainly, by comparison, confined; but so far as it goes, nothing is to be mentioned in the same day with it—that is, so far as comfort is concerned. Places even inland may be visited in this way, for almost anywhere a horse or two can be mustered, and the craft left in charge of her crew. What a difference between turning into your own berth at night, and affording the amusement one does on shore to the Hellenic vermin. One good joke in this way happened to me once upon a time, showing what quarters travellers may stumble upon even with the best recommendations. A large party of us had started, particularly recommended by letter from the consular agent of a place that shall be nameless, to no less a person than the Demarch of a high-sounding Greek town, who was to do everything for us in the way of billeting. By great exertion, and with aching

bones, we managed to reach this place after night-fall, prolonging, for its hope's sake, our course through a most break-neck road, and through unseen but clamorous numbers of their wolf-like dogs. At last we came up with a miserable shed, which proved to be the mansion of the great man. Of course we should have looked for no other floor but the mudden one we found, had it not been for our magnificent recommendation, which warranted the expectation of a suite of apartments. But the floor was so packed with goods and chattels, affording the most comfortable roosting for the fleas, and with children who brought in ever-fresh collections to the stock, that among the many undelectable nights we passed, none equalled in horrors that one of official introduction and high classical association. And such is pretty generally the hap of him who ventures to pass the night in one of those habitations where sweeping and washing remain exotics, and where the αὐτόχθονες acquire impenetrable skins. Now, all this sort of thing you avoid in a boat, besides converting the mere locomotion from a frequent punishment into a delight: always supposing, be it remembered, that you have not to beat your way home up the Sinus Saronicus against a tempest. But the old story of the rose and the thorn comes in here too. By land you are exposed to the miseries of your nightly quarterings: by sea you may rejoice your heart with the beauties with which Nature rejoices to adorn, many

of which she reserves for, the coast, and plunge each morning into the brine with an unsmarting skin; and if you be a genuine lover of the picturesque, you will be no less eager to seek it among the fantasies of human society than among the rocks and crags of a landscape.

So thought I and my two friends as we sat smoking the *chibouque* of reflection, at that best of Smyrna's *cafés*, on the French quay. We were unanimous on the conclusion that Smyrna had no earthly right to the title of a Turkish city, except the accident of its happening to be in Turkey. You may go half over the place and meet not a single Turk, except those wonderful fellows, the porters, whose herculean powers have been so often noticed; or perhaps friend Hassan, the chief of the police, making a progress, with some couple of grim attendants. In fact, in the motley of its society, if any one colour prevail, it is that of France: for among all decent people her language is spoken, and in all reunions of pretension her colonists are the more numerous body. The Greeks, to be sure, are in great plenty, but they occupy chiefly the lower grades. And as it so happens that the Sisters of Charity have here an establishment, and maintain, with much ability and diligence, a female school, the only one in the place—and that the Lazarists are equally sedulous in their province, it seems not unlikely that Smyrna will become entirely French in spirit, so far as the upper

classes are concerned. At present the mixture only savours strongly of the Gallic ingredient. And a most agreeable mixture it makes, affording the blended essences of many nations. Few who have seen much of that society can entertain its reflection without pleasure; and all are wise to make the most of its image, as the wide world affords no twin establishment. Coming from many parts of Europe, the colonists have, by the influences of climate and association, been blended into a general assimilation of character, yet retaining the one or two salient points of nationality. Their physiognomies express the wild influences of Ionia; and it would be vain to seek in their native countries such beautiful specimens of French or Italian women (I except Englishwomen) as are to be found in this birthplace of poetry. It is a city of wonderful linguists, for the necessities of intercourse demand at least three, and in many cases four, languages—Greek with the servants, Italian with the shopkeepers, and French among the polished. Many of them possess more than this number, and truly wonderful it is to see them turn from one guest to another in their pleasant assemblies, and to each address the tongue of his proper country. The same causes that loosened the vowels and softened the utterance of the old Greek in Ionia, have dipped in honey the tongues of the modern Levantines; and whatever they be speaking it is always mellifluously. It is no less true that the old grace of these shores

revives in the persons of the ladies, and gives a Lydian softness to all that they do. Whether you mark the Armenian matron, languid from her siesta, seeking the breeze at her lattice, or the more active Frank maiden at the hour of her evening promenade, you are ever struck with the idea of grace and poetry. But chiefly is it pleasant to mark them when the unruffled sea and cloudless moon invite them to wander on the *marina*, and embark on the waters—when the hot sun has persecuted the day, and evening first allowed to breathe freely. There is the bay alive with boats, and resonant of music and laughter, and the shore alive with gay promenaders. There are certain seasons when it might be presumed that the Smyrnists divorce night from sleep; for often have I listened to the cheerful sound till long past midnight, and still has some passing boat brought music to contribute to my dreams. Or take your hat and wander forth at evening to the banks of Meles, where Homer sang—whose waters have washed the feet of the epic father, and say whether Homer's self would not acknowledge these groups as worthy of the soil.

Now this is all pleasant exceedingly, but to enjoy this sort of thing sustainedly one should not have an English constitution. We are a phlegmatic set, to whom such zests should be dealt out homœopathically, else do we soon begin to criticise and take exceptions. Now it so happens that we had entered upon the experience of this delectability with every good disposi-

tion towards it, but a still better disposition towards the getting beyond it if we could, that we might see something of the real state of the people. We soon voted Smyrna a bore, as was likely with those who in coming thither had been bent on using it only as a stepping-stone to get farther. But this was more easily said than done with us, who were travellers not for our own fancy's sake, but in the service of her most gracious Majesty. Had we been simply unfettered, our will was good to have started directly coastward, and to have explored those vast tracts of Asia Minor, of so much of which nothing is known. The country between the coast and the western border of Persia, explored in a direct line, not going towards Erzeroum, and a divergence southward towards and about Caramania, would be a fine field for travel. We could well afford to receive some addition to our knowledge of the central parts of Asia Minor, and I should like right well to be one of two bound to the borders of Lake Van, to pay a visit to the Armenian patriarch. But such an expedition would take a deal of time and of money. Now we had but the short interval of time at our disposal, during which it was judged that Britannic interests might suffer our absence without detriment. Happily for us, we knew that foreign infection was but skin-deep in this country; so that, although the curious recesses were beyond our reach, we might, by a comparatively short expedition, arrive at the texture and

substance of the mass. Two cities invited us, Aidin and Magnesia, both of which are, as nearly as possible, free from foreigners; for the Rayahs, though they be Christians, are not of course to be considered foreign to that soil, in which they have been implanted since before its occupation by the Turks. In Magnesia, so far as we could discover, there dwelt but a single Frank, who was consular agent for England, as he was, probably, for half-a-dozen other European Powers—an office little likely to be useful or needful in the case of personal protection to distressed wanderers, but no doubt not without value as a commercial relationship. Magnesia also is interesting, because it is the seat of the great Carasman, Oglû Pascha, a name to which are attached little less than royal honours. He is one of the great hereditary dignitaries of the kingdom, who from olden time, and till but a few years ago, used to be almost kings within their territory. At the command of the sultan, these men used to bring into the field enormous bodies of cavalry, raised by themselves, forming the staple of the Ottoman armies; and Mr Slade, in his book on Turkey, places the alterations of Mahmoud with respect to these Beys among the prominent causes of the decay of the Ottoman empire.

The vote passed in favour of Magnesia, partly because we expected in that place to find, through the good offices of the consular agent, decent quarters

in some Greek house. The question of ways and means remained. The ordinary mode of conducting these proceedings is through the ministry of a *kawash* or guide—a person whose assistance is generally considered indispensable in a country where one neither knows the roads, nor can exchange a word of inquiry with the people. But this plan was little suited to our taste, as we knew by experience that these men are apt to assume the absolute control of their parties. In this respect they are no worse than the rest of the whole tribe of *ciceroni*, who assuredly are among the greatest bores that necessity imposes. If they would confine themselves to leading the way and interpreting, and rest contented with solicitude for the horses, they would be useful and endurable. S—— forewent for a moment his amber mouthpiece to give us his experience and opinion.

"These *kawashes* are greater plagues on a journey than a pebble in the shoe. When I was a youngster on board the Blanche, we started, a party of us, for Aidin, under convoy of one of them with a first-rate character. We had hardly got clear of the town when he began to take command of us, coolly wanting to regulate our pace. We stood no nonsense, but set off full cry, with him at our heels shouting like mad. He was presently up with me, and caught my horse's bridle, uttering all sorts of unintelligible exclamations. The fellow drew his yataghan, and I really thought was going to cut my head off. How-

ever, he vented his rage on the brute, striking him with the flat of his weapon; and it was with difficulty I pacified him at last by saying 'Pasha!' several times, and pointing forward—giving him to understand that if he did not behave himself, I should complain to the Pasha as soon as we arrived."

"And then," said K——, "you must always battle with them for your halting-place, if they do not happen to fancy it. If you want to go ahead, the horses are tired; and if you want to stop, there's sure to be some better place farther on."

I joined in the vote against subjecting ourselves to tutelage.

"But these fellows do something else besides showing the way—they interpret. Isn't that rather a floorer for us?"

"Not a bit of it," said S——. "I'll be the ἡγεμών, for I've been the road once before; and K—— there talks a little Turkish."

"Yes, I know the numbers, and can say '*Kateh saket*,' which means, 'How many hours?' or 'How far to?'"

"That will do capitally; for if you say '*Kateh saket* Magnesia?' any blockhead will know that you mean 'How far to Magnesia?' Besides, we all can say '*Salam Aleikum*,' so can do the polite as well as the interrogative."

Reader, this was a mistake. A Mussulman loves not to hear this salutation at the mouth of a Chris-

tian; it is the expression of a religious wish, and when uttered by one who receives not the Korán, it falls on the ear of a Turk as a profanation. The correct thing to say by way of being civil is, "*A-oorahah!*"

Thus slender was the stock of language with which we started; but perhaps we were not much worse off than we should have been had we known a good deal more. It is all very well with our European dialects to have a certain smattering of grammar and principle, but the hopeless languages of the East come under a different category. Any knowledge of their theory short of actual accuracy is nearly useless—perhaps worse than useless, because, by beguiling the unhappy smatterer into ambitious attempts, it cheats him of the little power he may have of rendering himself intelligible. A man who is content with the attainment of a certain vocabulary of substantives, in whose pronunciation he is perfect, has much the best chance, because he can eke out the other parts of speech by gesture. But the *attaché* of legation, who has been poring over their orthography, and hammering at principle, often proves the uselessness of his acquisitions for colloquial purposes. However, we might have done very well with a little more knowledge than we possessed on this particular occasion.

We did not know at this time what Magnesia could do for us in the way of an inn, though we

were quite aware of the fact, that throughout the kingdom *khans* are provided for the accommodation of travellers. What we had seen in this way was very undesirable, being little more than what might serve to minister to the comfort of the horses. In some places the subsiding stream of travellers has left them bare and ruined; in others—Smyrna, to wit—there is so ready entertainment elsewhere, that the *khan* has become little more than a public stable-yard. And here, any time of the day, you may see tethered a collection of donkeys that would set up all the costermongers in London, and drivers who would surely make fortunes by their lessons, if their brethren of Hampstead possessed ambition and gratitude. The vulgar argument of the stick may be occasionally exhibited, but it is by the magic of a single word that the energies of the donkey are usually aroused. And the mystery of the training is this, that neither words nor blows are effective, except from the initiated. Often it will happen, that after long trial of coaxing, the meekest rider will be betrayed into the experiment of cudgelling. It will then certainly happen that, after having cudgelled his full, he will yield the victory to the impassible brute, and be reduced to hope that when he has had thistles enough, he may be induced to move on. Suddenly there sounds behind him the exclamation of *Dêáh! Dêáh!* and the donkey starts into a dislocating trot. This is your true driver's

policy, to make his presence and aid indispensable. By dint of great practice I acquired a pretty accurate imitation of this sound, and have practised it successfully. But the animals were quick to discover the imposture, and to punish it by extra impassibility.

Many of the best *khans* or caravansaries are of royal foundation; others, like the fountains, the monuments of departed piety. But much as we might admire the institution, we could not feel very ambitious of occupying a billet of so very gregarious and inexclusive a character. Besides, in these *khans* you must provide for yourself all that you require in the shape of provisions; and it was too much of a good thing to carry with us tea and bread and butter. We clung to the hope of finding lodging in the shade of domestic hospitality, the rather because of our recommendation to the consular agent. A second string was added to our bow by a worthy Armenian of Smyrna. He kindly assisted our intention by a letter to a compatriot of his at Magnesia, of whom the least that we could expect was, that he would receive us to the fellowship of trencher and hearth—that is, should we present our introduction, for, in the first instance, our purpose was to seek the man of office.

We had some debate concerning the propriety of our going ostensibly armed—no doubt, however, concerning the advisability of our actually being armed. In those desolate tracts, where you may

ride pretty well all day and meet no wayfarer, except some lone camel-driver riding at the head of his long string of animals, it is impossible to say what contingencies may be your hap. It is, to say the least, a locality where thieves might have things pretty much their own way; for the guard-houses, scattered throughout the routes, are far from being within hail of each other, and far from possessing the control of the road midway. Nay, they are themselves tenanted by men so fierce by nature, and so imperfectly disciplined, that some people might fear the guards more than the robbers. They are not detachments of the regular forces, but men taken chiefly from the Xebeques, whose manners and dress are sufficiently distinct from those of the ordinary Turks. Each of these detachments is placed under the control of an Agah; and on the personal character of this officer depends the security of the district. The prescribed discipline is necessarily strict, for any admitted relaxation would soon lead to confusion. Especially is it enjoined that all spirituous liquors be absolutely excluded from the guard-houses — and a neglect of this law by the Agah is never forgiven. When intoxicated, they are said to rage like demons, respecting no person or thing—utterly rejecting all semblance of discipline. It will be long before I forget the apprehensions connected with even faint symptoms in them of approach to such a state. A party of us, with ladies among our numbers, had

halted for the night at a guard-house. The spot was of the rarest beauty—the evening such as breathes only in Ionia; cities and men were removed out of sight and thought; and full of poetry and peace—the pleasing sadness we had caught on the hallowed ground of the mighty Ephesus—we resigned ourselves to the influence of the moment. What was that sound of revelry that broke upon the stillness? The mandolin tinkled—voices were heard in chorus. We got up to explore, and found, to our consternation, that the guards of our station, having received a visit from their brethren of the next detachment, were holding festival on the occasion. We had previously been informed that the Agah was absent on duty, and had left the command to his ancient—and this we were ready to suppose was not calculated to tighten the reins of discipline. Drinking and jollity were such natural associates, that we feared terribly these men would be getting at spirits—and then what did we not fear for the fair companions of our adventure? However, to make a long story short, the men did not get drunk, and separated peacefully after the performance of many terpsichorean novelties. But they taught the careless to feel that travellers in such a country should not be without the means of defence. It is quite true that arms may do you a bad turn, either by tempting you to a hasty display, or by being of so costly a character as to excite the cupidity of some ruffian. But it is just as true that any other

thing you possess may do you the like ill turn among men who would shoot you for the value of your skin. The golden mean is to be armed usefully, but not showily; and above all things, to be very discreet in the production of weapons.

The first of these laws on this particular occasion I egregiously transgressed. My two friends were supplied with unimpeachable pistols of their own; but I, being of peaceable disposition, had made no such provision. A worthy friend on shore supplied the deficiency, by lending me a pair of the most formidable weapons one would wish to see. They were of the old style of theatrical horse-pistols, as long nearly as a small carbine, and beyond any ordinary man's power of holding steady. The stocks were deeply incrusted with silver, or something that looked very like it. The only objection to them was, that nothing could persuade the flint to give out a spark, or induce the pan to take the hint at the proper time. Yet though I knew them to be in fact thoroughly useless, they contributed sensibly to my comfort, for they were most excellent make-believes. Our steeds were supplied by our good friend George, the Greek stable-keeper, as no Turk would have let out his animals on such an occasion without sending along with them a *kawash* to look after the mad Franks. It betokened no little confidence in George, that he allowed his horses to be taken away, whither and for how long he knew not.

It is a noble climate where you can start of a fine morning, with a certainty that the weather will continue and fulfil its promise. One starts light, without any wrappings, or any thing more than he has on. One *tescharé*, or passport, was our luggage for three. Our first little adventure was about this same *tescharé*. It is to be got, as are all things in this land, only through the medium of interpreters and *kawashs*. A first-rate bore it is to be in all matters of business subjected to the ministration of these gentry: and what a pity it is that some steady Englishmen will not qualify themselves to fulfil their functions. But from the most important diplomatic negotiations down to the most trivial matter of convenience, procedure can only be had through such agency; at least almost without exception at present, whatever revolutions may lurk in the recent studies of the *attachés* at Constantinople.

Mahmoud, the Janissary—by the way, it is odd that they should call this consular body-guard of one by such a name—brought us the document, and then, of course, stood by to pocket his *backshish*. We were then making our final preparations for the start, laying in a little personal provender at the restaurant in Frank Street, at the door of which stood our animals, saddled and impatient.

"Give him his tip," we said to S——, who had been installed paymaster for the nonce.

A smile and a coin were forthwith presented to the

functionary. "Bow, wow, wow," or something like it, uttered by our Mahometan friend, made us look up, and we saw him unaccepting and unsmiling. "Why, thou greedy varlet!" (friend, the words were innocuous, because unintelligible), "'tis by so much exactly too much for thee."

It is an amusing thing to have a dispute where words will not second energy. Such a scene have I noted more than once, as a fine pyschological demonstration. You abuse a guide or a donkey-driver in a language he does not understand, for disobeying directions that he did not understand, word or particle. The whole thing is absurd, and as a man of sense you ought to be philosophical. But when I have noted you in such case, and seen that you do not lose your temper, nor abuse the offender in round English, I will set you down as of placid temperament. Mahmoud growled, and looked as if he would fain have resumed the paper or abducted the horses: and thus it was with the interchange of such pleasantries, and followed by his good wishes, that we started.

"Bravo," said K——; "we start with a row, we shall be all right presently."

And now stoop well your head and keep your eyes open as you turn the corner into the Armenian quarter. These houses, that make such beautiful streets, are ticklish things to ride by. They all project forward, having the upper storey supported by a kind of flying buttress. These are at no great height

from the ground, so that an unbending horseman passing under, would infallibly knock his head against the corner of one of their first-floors. But chiefly on donkeys is this risk noticeable—the stubborn brutes which it is much the fashion to ride, and whom none but the drivers can guide. On entering Smyrna by night—those dull streets where gas is not—your only plan is to keep well in the middle of the street, right in the hollow. It is a beautiful quarter of the town, —in itself picturesque and variegated in colour, and beset with the fairest embellishments. Look up at that lattice for a moment only, and then prick your way again. Did you see those lustrous eyes and graceful head-dress? The sun is now high, and these stars twinkle but from lattices. Pass this way at even, and you shall see them congregated in brilliancy. They are not of the retiring nature that shuns observation. They sit congregated round every door wooing the breeze. Supper is spread in the spacious halls, beyond which the open doors give to view a perspective of garden. Nay, you may stop and stare—the men are occupied with their pipes, and the women are not offended at admiration.

Right interesting are these Armenians, of whom the men have all the riches, and the women all the beauty (at least unveiled and cognisable) of Turkey. They have lost all trace of the active spirit that in an age of iron kept them busy in the *melée* of nations. Their gravest senior would stare unintelligent were

you to speak to him of Tiridates or the Romans, and with their thoughts of Persia no ideas of tyranny are mixed: no stirring of the ancient spirit that kept them faithful in an ocean of foes, and rendered their land a continued battle-field. They give no signs of intelligence if you challenge them on the subject of Eutychus, by whose arch heresy they suffered severance from Catholicity, and in whose dogmas they live. They are a quiet, matter-of-fact, business-like people—the bankers and capitalists of the kingdom. Their mode of existence under the shadow of the sultan's mercy, but without national representation or protection, has subdued them to a condition of patient endurance, and killed the energy of their nature. They are quiet, fat, and lethargic, reserving their anxieties for money-getting.

There might be to fiery spirits something humiliating in the dress to which they are so anxious to acquire the right—the huge and ugly cap which bespeaks them to be under some particular foreign protection, as the case may be, which is their only safeguard against all sorts of oppression. But where nationality is a mere idea without embodiment, it soon becomes as a dream. The Armenian is content to be endured and protected. Meanwhile he is not without a sort of national ambition; but it is of a new kind for him. They believe themselves to be the most ancient of people, retaining the original language that was spoken before the dispersion of

Babel, and by consequence the identical language that was spoken by Adam. An interesting excursion might be made on this subject, seemingly so far at variance with the conclusions of learned ethnographers. Their deductions are from undoubted facts, and tend to their conclusion with a force that some philologists at least have considered irresistible.

Through the Armenian quarter our road lay onward for a short distance by the banks of Meles. It is but an insignificant stream, of scarcely sufficient tide to turn a mill; but in no better case are Ilissus and Cephissus found to be in the present day. The shade of Socrates still seems to linger over the Attic streamlet, swelling its puny tide to the capacity of the loftiest musings of the humanised; and the memory of Homer is wedded to these waters of Meles. The critics who would disprove the existence of the bard, and assign the different members of his compositions to numerous anonymous authors, or to indefinite traditions, would find this no vantage-ground. The influences of the place would abash their contumacy. There is something poetical even now about the locality. The stream flows through the Armenian quarter, passing by a short course to the well-known Caravan-bridge, and thence into the open country. At pretty nigh all hours of the day, groups of nymphs may be seen washing clothes in the waters, exhibiting *tableaux vivants* of Nausicaa and her maidens. No vulgar washerwomen are these

with corrugated hands at reeking tubs, but such as painters and poets might celebrate. Washing is with them a pastime and an elegance—their laundry a studio of art. They go right into the water, and splash about their things like naïads sporting; and anon returning to the bank, put forth their little strength in beating out the clothes. It would be rash to say that the process is so effectual as our more homely method, but it is at least pretty to look at. At evening the banks of the stream assume another appearance. Gay crowds promenade, and cavalcades linger; people of many nations congregate to unbend the brow laden with the cares of the day. Fathers muse, maidens gambol, and matrons chide.

A little farther on, and we come to Caravan-bridge,—of all Smyrna's objects, perhaps the one best known by reputation. It has its name from the number of caravans that, entering Smyrna from the interior, have to pass over it. And see, there is at this moment a string of camels in the way, so that we may as well halt in this convenient shade till they be gone by. That little Ethiopian will look after our horses, and Ali will bring us coffee and *chibouques* in a twinkling. See how pleasantly these trees overshadow our resting-place, and how the gliding of the water, here a broader and more rapid stream, seems to cool our very thoughts. This is the great picnic place for the citizens—a sort of Turkish Vauxhall.

Yet what a difference between the orderly composure of these holiday-makers, and the noisy mirth of our own compatriots. These folks take their *kef*, as they do everything else, quietly. Here you may see hundreds of revellers, and not a drunkard among them. Perhaps the repose of the scene draws some of its influence from those sombre burying-grounds, of which two are just opposite. Nowhere is such truth of funereal effect preserved as in this country. Père la Chaise and all European cemeteries are puerile in comparison. The stately evergreen which they have consecrated to the overshadowing of the dead fulfils the idea of solemnity and awe. There is effect in the manner in which the simple headstones are planted together, with no separation of rails, no interspersion of pretending sarcophagi. All have returned to their dust, and have put off the ephemeral distinctions of life; they have returned to the bosom of their mother, where there is no aristocracy, and slumber as brethren till they shall be awakened to new distinctions.

This is a place where at odd times many a pleasant hour may be passed. It is such a thoroughfare (at least the bridge, though you are in the shade by its side, well out of the bustle), that there is always something passing worthy of notice. It is also a capital place to practise the language, if you have any of it to expend. You see the strangest figures entering from the interior with their merchandise, which is all

diligently examined by the officer of the customs here posted. It is a singular thing that the long trains of camels are invariably headed by a donkey, who takes the lead as coolly as if it were quite in order that such an insignificant brute should drag after him some five hundred animals, each big enough to eat him. The Caravandgis might be supposed to come all from one locality, so strong is the family likeness subsisting between them. Perhaps they actually do, for this hereditary disposition of employments is quite according to the genius of the nation. They are short, stout, little men, with round smooth faces, especially stolid in expression. They dress in the old style, never wearing the fez; and sure we ought to take the portrait of one of them, were it only for the sake of their boots. Such buckets are not often worn, and to pedestrians would be impracticable. But these men do not walk: seated on their donkeys, they jog on at the head of the caravan, bearing the merchandise of Asia through wildernesses where the foot of man is strange. With man they have little communion, and with nature they have little sympathy, or their soulless visages belie them. Life to them must be a blended experience of tobacco and camels' bells. I have marked them at night, when arrived at their journey's end, and bivouacking in the midst of their animals. The brutes formed a circular rampart, in the centre of which reclined the men. It was a desolate spot, such as generally dis-

poses men to sociability with the stray fellow-creature or two who may happen to have been led to the same point; and here were two or three fellow-countrymen of the drivers. But they took no notice of their neighbours; they performed their prostrations, they disposed of their supper, and coiled themselves up to rest. If they rose for a moment, it was to look after some restless camel; and early in the morning, long before the sun, when I turned out, they were departed to a more remote solitude. But now the road is clear, and we make a start of it, leaving the town fairly behind.

"Stop, my men," said J——; "look at your horses' feet."

"What's that for?"

"We shall pass never another smithy this livelong day; and should a screw be loose in any of their shoes, it would be rather a bring-up for us." Sage and sound advice for those who have a long ride before them, which yet at this time of our need we rejected, and for which I afterwards suffered. Awakening to a sense of my error, I did afterwards make a divergence to a village by the way; but there I found no artist, and in the course of the day I learned fully to appreciate the importance of a nail in time. By the way, the shoes hereabout are of a peculiar kind, composed of a plate that entirely covers the hoof. They are at least effective in preventing the infraction of peebles.

Our road was in the line that leads to the pretty village of Bonabat, leaving the no less pretty village of Boujah on the right, but far away, and hidden among the hills. These are two pleasant suburban retreats that the merchants of Smyrna have established as a *ricovero* from the toils of the city. Bonabat is more especially inhabited by the French, and Boujah by the English. There is a third village, somewhat farther off in the direction of Ephesus, called Sittagui. A few years ago, when the Turkey trade was in its palmy days, the merchants used to do their business in most agreeable style. It was during certain months only that they went every day to their offices, the rest of the year being permitted to enjoyment. At present, though perhaps somewhat less magnificent in their style, they are eminently comfortable in their ways. During the summer months their families are removed to these pretty country places; and at sundown each evening the ways are covered with the returning fathers and brothers. For us Englishmen, Boujah was naturally the accustomed haunt. Here is to be found the charming mixture of nationalities, which is the feature of Smyrneot society. Their ways are manly, without constraint, and in many respects patriarchal. The young ladies never wear bonnets, and are generally to be seen on a fine evening sitting in the open air before their own gates. The whole community having been pretty well all brought up together from

childhood, are on the happiest terms of intimacy: surnames are almost obsolete. Ungrateful must the heart be that can remember without pleasure days passed in their society, where every house is open, and every face has a smile for the guest. There is one particular spot here, called the Three Wells, where my evening's walk has ever brought before me images fraught with recollection of Rebecca's introduction to Isaac, or of Jacob wooing Rachel. We now passed into the open country, where the road, leading over a low ridge of hills, becomes of less definite track. And the last village was passed, and thenceforward we were to meet stations only as rare landmarks. Hereabouts sugar, as a general luxury, disappears; the *caffedgis* supplying the mere coffee, unless some more luxurious stranger demand the drug. It is then dealt out from a small private store, and notified by a separate charge in the bill. The homely old Turks are ignorant of the uses of sugar; and it would seem that their language does not supply a descriptive term, as their "*shuk-kar*" is evidently a mispronunciation of our word. One could not without romancing say much of the beauty of the country through which we were passing at this early stage of our journey. It is even flat and tame, and appears to be so more decidedly by contrast with most that lies in this region. Almost everywhere else the prospect is bounded by beautiful hills, here and there aspiring to the character of mountains, whose sides vary con-

stantly in tint as they rangingly receive the rays of the rising or the setting sun. Or sometimes one has to pass through vast plains, where neglect and desolation have, in the exuberance of nature, assumed the appearance of luxuriant cultivation. Few artificial pastures could equal the natural beds of oleander that are sometimes found here stretching far away till lost behind the crags of a ravine, and which, in their unconstrained vegetation, show colours that the hothouse might envy. And particularly are the wildernesses of myrtle remarkable, which for miles grow in thick jungle, through which it is difficult to preserve the narrow track kept for passage. It is curious to pass through these odorous thickets, where you can never see around you, and seldom many feet before you, on account of the windings of the way. Long are heard the tinklings of the camels' bells, and the heavy plod of their feet, before the train comes into sight, and many are the manœuvrings to effect a passage in peace. The camels, however many, are all linked together, and to the preceding donkey; and as they cannot be always persuaded to observe due distance, so as to keep the line taut, nor to follow each other on the same side of the road, it may be conceived that to pass them is sometimes a work of difficulty. It is a comfort that they never bite—at least never in ordinary cases; but still, till one is used to their near contact, it does seem formidable to be involved and hampered among these

as one constantly must be. But this particular road of ours was, for some way, diversified by neither beauty nor incident; and as things go, perhaps it is well that so it was, for therefore have I the less scruple at passing over observations topographical, and making haste to tell of what things befell us in the city of the unbelievers. One single party of travellers we did meet, whose journeying exercised considerable influence on our fortunes. It was about mid-day that we saw approaching, from the opposite direction to ourselves, a Frank gentleman, attended by a respectable-looking squire. We knew him to be coming from Magnesia, because there was no other place from which he could be coming; and by the same token, we shrewdly guessed him to be the one Frank inhabitant, the proconsul, on whose good offices we had reckoned. The only alternative was, that he might be some casual visitor like ourselves, whom business or curiosity had led on a journey, whence he was returning. But as he drew nearer, we read in the incurious expression of his face that he was certainly at home; and the air of accustomed importance that beset him argued him to be one in authority. No men, surely, can be so alive to the sense of borrowed dignity as consular agents in out-of-the-way corners; at least no men carry so pompous an exposition on their brow. By these tokens we identified our stranger friend.

"Hail him," said K——.

"Buon giorno, signore!"

"Servo, signori. Andate in Magnesia?"

"I told you so," said K——.

And so it was. He, her Britannic Majesty's, and half-a-dozen other majesties' agent, stood convicted by his speech. The man had not been out of Magnesia, perhaps, any day for the last twelve months, and he had chosen, for the prosecution of his foreign interests, that precise day when these three desolate Englishmen had come to throw themselves on his cares.

However, our blood was up, and our souls superior to trifles.

"Here's a poser! Shall we reveal?"

"Not a bit of it. We don't want him, nor any one else. Any mixture of aid would have marred the spirit of our expedition; besides, remember our friend the Seraph."

This Seraph was of no higher than terrestrial order, being no other than the Armenian to whom we had the letter commendatory. What the word in their application means, I cannot say exactly, but believe it to be descriptive of the sordid occupation of a *basqua;* at any rate, it is a common style and title, Αρμενικῶς.

In the confidence of this our possession, we allowed the European to pass on without giving him any hint of our forlorn condition, and without craving any direction for our conduct. He evidently thought that we had some bosom friend ready to receive us,

or at any rate that we were fully up to all the ways and means of the country—as well he might, seeing us roam about in such *dégagé* style. We were far too jealous of our dignity to betray any symptoms of indecision, or having been taken aback; and our adieux were waved to him with a perfect air of being at home and comfortable.

"Now then for an Armenian at home! How fortunate that fellow should be out of the way, for now our friend the Seraph will be sure to insist on our honouring his roof."

"Capital spreads, too, they give—judging by the samples one sees laid out of an evening in their halls."

"Hospitable people; are they not, K——?"

"Oh, very. Not that ever I have been in one of their houses."

"Nor I—any farther than having a pipe with old John the Dragoman at his porch."

"Nor I."

Here was a crown to our adventure! An untrodden city, an unvisited people, a welcome to the mysterious bosom of Armenian hospitality!

STAGE SECOND.

The sun was already below the horizon when we entered on the plain of Magnesia. Our poor brutes were sadly jaded, for the latter part of the journey

had been very severe. For some time it had been over a rocky path, strewn with loose stones; and the last stage is by a pretty abrupt and very rough descent. My poor animal had cast a shoe, and the only relief that could be afforded in his calamity was to dismount and lead him. We too were somewhat tired; but the glorious sight that burst upon us bathed our spirits afresh in the waters of invigoration. The road had for some time kept us dodging among crags and corners, which allowed no prospect, and where, indeed, we were well employed picking out our way. But when we emerged, what a sight did we behold! One of the noble Asiatic plains stretched before us. Far as the eye could reach to right and left, the green expanse extended; and immediately before us it was only in the far distance that the boundary of hills was seen. Here and there clumps of trees variegated the turf; and a fair river wound itself amid all, looking like some huge and silvery serpent disporting itself in this apt solitude. Think how beautiful such a scene must have looked at evening, when the tops of the hills and a few fleecy clouds were rosy in the sunbeams. Its expression was paradisiacal, the rather because the empire of Peace was invaded by no sight nor sound. The air was absolutely still, except for the sound of our own footsteps: as for our voices, after the first expression of delight, they were hushed. We seemed to be gazing on some primeval solitude,—on the spot where

Astræa might have last lingered, and whence the impress of her footstep had not been yet obliterated by the violence of man. It was a perfect presentation of the still and calm, and touched the same associations that are made to thrill by Flaxman or Retsch.

On the verge of this plain, snugly ensconced under the lee of the hills we had been descending, lies the city of Magnesia. It is of reverend aspect, and quite worthy of its incomparable situation. It is placed so closely under the hills, that its details are very gradually unfolded to one advancing. First appears a minaret, that most graceful of architectural conceptions, then comes a burying-ground, and at last peep out the domes of the baths and mosques and particular houses. The place has quite the air of having come to hide itself in this quiet nook ; and its inhabitants seemed to be of the same mind, for not one of them could we see. At such an hour, poetic justice demanded that there should have been scattered over the ways groups of peasants returning from their toil, and citizens refreshing themselves with an evening walk. But here seemed to be no fields to cultivate. All looked as if it were common land ; and one could but feel what a first-rate exercising ground Oglú Pascha had for his cavalry. As for the citizens, walking does not come within their idea of enjoyment ; to which exertion is so essentially opposed, that probably half of them would forego

their very pipes, if smoking were attainable only on condition of filling and lighting for one's self.

Now let me say that a wayfarer's trouble is not always over when he has arrived at the city of his destination. I should like to put any one who thinks it is outside of one or two places that I know, and tell him to find his way in. *Le grand capitaine* thanked the garrison of Malta for having had the kindness not only to capitulate, but to open the gates for him, as otherwise he did not see how he should ever have got in. And so I opine, there be places where a capitulation would be incomplete without the attendance of one of the indigenous to act as pilot. I am afraid that I might have taken this journey in vain, and sighed in exclusion, had I been left to my own devices for the effecting of an entry. The river surrounds, in great part, the walls; and one might make pretty well the entire circuit before hitting the right point of ingress. But one of us was gifted with topographical instinct in high degree, and at once nosed the course that was to lead us to the bridge. Our poor brutes seemed to sympathise in the refreshment of our spirits; and even my unfortunate Rosinante consented to his burden, and put his best foot foremost. One of his feet, alas! was what maritime gentlemen would call a regular *worser*—the foot which lacked a shoe, and which, defenceless, had to sustain such rude battering. The hoof of this foot was cracked, and I was in much tribulation, both on

the poor horse's account and on my own. But I made the best of the circumstances, encouraging the animal with all that I could remember and imitate of the dialect in which man converses with the horse, and comforting myself with thinking how soon the poor fellow would be stabled and shod.

The bridge over which we passed was very pretty and not very shaky, nor by any means so broken backed as are the greater number of Turkish specimens. At the moment of our passing it was lined with venerable old fellows, who had turned out to enjoy their evening pipe. They were dressed in the most approved and unreformed style, and many of them had long beards, descending to the girdle. They sat in perfect stillness, no man speaking to or seeming to care for his neighbour. Indeed, from experiences among them, we might almost argue that though man is by nature gregarious, he is conversational only by acquirement. At any rate, they show how few words may answer all the purposes of business, and how little all of us would talk if wives and domestic matters were proscribed subjects. As we passed through the midst of them, not a soul looked at us, not a nudge did one of them give to his neighbour, not a puff less of smoke was emitted. One might have concluded it to be with them an everyday occurrence to see three Europeans ride in such style into their town. Yet you might be

bold to say that they had never seen such an entry before. The mode of travelling is so strictly regulated by necessity, that in all probability, of all the few Franks who have entered this place, none have ever done so in the independent style we affected. At least, if by chance some couple may have done so, it has certainly been where there has existed a knowledge of the people and language. If our appearance did not at first enlighten them as to our greenness and ignorance, we soon stood confessed by our attempts at inquiry. Our first object was, of course, to discover the habitation of the Seraph, whose name we had written down in our own character, as the hieroglyphics which stood for direction to the letter would have been no guide to us. Now our stock of words did not go the length of any direct inquiry; for *Kateh saket*, our old stand-by, was now used up.

"Seraph! Seraph!" we sang out, with as strong an expression of inquiry as we could throw into our looks and gestures. At this some of them certainly did look up, but with the least excitement conceivable. One of the more benevolent vouchsafed to us a few words, but soon stopped with the most unmistakable look of pity when he saw that we did not understand him. Evidently he pitied our ignorance and despised us. No further attempt was made to enlighten us; nor were the peaceful seniors in the least discomposed at the unsuccessful result of the inquiries that possibly

were uttered in the speech of the old man. We had nothing for it but to go ahead and trust to the chance of falling in with some one better skilled in the language of signs. Oh, thought we, had it been anywhere near Naples that this escapade had conducted us, we might have done well. Among those pantomimic people the language of the lips becomes an unimaginative and lazy expedient, by no means necessary to the uses of communication. Nature, whose voice is one to all, has given to them such force of gesture, that it must be a very long and difficult story that they could not tell or understand without words. But poor old John Turk is a different animal, and can be dealt with only by dialectic precision. Never had we seen such an exemplification of their incurious, impassible diathesis as they now presented to our cost. We turned back a long and admiring gaze at the group as we passed onwards, for truly it was a most picturesque position. But we had to revert to the present necessity of finding some lodging, more perhaps on account of the horses than of ourselves. For us it would have been no great hardship to pass the night, should need be, on the dry soft turf beneath the clear sky, which shone so purely above us that we absolved the neighbourhood from all suspicion of marshes, which are the only objection to sleeping in the open air in this country. All looked dry, and clear, and pure. But our poor horses, who had been beguiled into an effort by the sight of

the town, began now again to droop, and evidently considered us chargeable with a breach of promise in thus prolonging their labours. Whither to go we could not tell. A labyrinth of streets lay before us, and amongst them it was our object to pick out the way to the Armenian quarter. Turks keep early hours, and but few people were astir in the streets when we entered, and after our wanderings had continued but a short time, scarcely a soul was to be seen. Now I am prepared to say, that no desolation is like the desolation of strangeness in a large city. St Jerome in the wilderness, or Stylites on his pillar, were not more lonely than many a poor recluse in our city of two million inhabitants. And we ourselves would have been infinitely more at ease had we been called upon to bivouac beyond the sight of human habitation.

Up one street and down another we passed, till we were wearied almost beyond endurance, and really uneasy for our cattle. We met no one, or if we did, no one that noticed us. The muffled figure of some woman would pass by, who, when she saw the *giaours*, would draw her veil yet more closely over her, and hurry on her way. One or two children stopped to stare at us; but we knew experimentally that their untutored fanaticism was more likely to have a shy at our heads than to attempt to understand or direct us. We kept a sharp look-out for some Greek or Armenian house wherein, for lucre's sake, we might

be received in the first instance, reserving to ourselves the introduction to the Seraph as a *bonne bouche*. But still we wearied on, and saw no hospice. All was shut up and closed. They were evidently not of the social temperament that distinguished our Smyrna friends, — no doors were open, no family parties visible, no suppers spread out. Some two hours passed away, night fairly descended, and then the place might have passed for a city of the dead.

The fix was becoming unquestionably awkward, and our mirth, which had thriven wonderfully on the absurdity of our position, was passing over to what old ladies call the wrong side of our mouths. Such an incurious, apathetic set we had never before met. If our expectation had not been exactly that some bustling Boniface would have come rushing out to welcome us to his best parlour, we had at least reckoned on finding some person who knew the value of money and the requirements of strangers. But we were completely nonplussed at the actual complexion of affairs, and I am afraid began to be out of humour with this particular part of the sultan's dominions. Still, however, we retained that facetious satisfaction that every wise man finds at the bottom of a really good *embroglio*,—viz., the sense of having concocted an adventure, and the curiosity of seeing what will come of it. Thus, though appearances were as if we should have to remain riding about those streets *ad infinitum*, we knew that something or

other must turn up, and were only a little impatient for the *dénouement.*

At last we stumbled on the benevolent stranger who was to help us out of our difficulty. A man in Christian costume was seen hastening towards us with the air of one who had heard that his friends were in trouble, and needed his assistance.

"Buona sera, signori."

How musical did the words sound!

"Oh, man," said we, "*per carità*, tell us what good soul of a Greek will take us into his house this night."

"*Padroni miei*, you are too late to get into any house this night. They are all gone to bed, and their houses are shut up. You must go to the *khan.*"

"Do you know where the Seraph —— lives?"

"Surely I know—it is not far from this spot."

"Then, if you would be very kind, you will take us to his house: for we have a letter for him, and we hope to put up at his house."

"*Andiam*,—come along; it is late, but the Seraph will not have gone to bed, for he is rich, and has much business. Only, my masters, you must make haste, so that if he cannot receive you, I may have time to lead you to the *khan* before that be also shut."

This last was a very disagreeable suggestion; but we would not admit in our own minds the probability of our needing the resources of public entertainment. We had made up our conclusions that the Seraph was

a very good fellow, and that no good fellow would turn us adrift under the circumstances, even though the entertainment of us might cost him a little inconvenience.

For something like another quarter of an hour we followed our benevolent guide, who led us into a quarter of comfortable and respectable appearance. It was not inferior to the Armenian quarter of Smyrna, except in respect to pictorial effect as a whole. The houses were particularly good, and built in a more seclusive spirit, the better ones being almost all detached. Before one of the very best of these our guide stopped.

"Here lives the Seraph ——."

It was a domicile of most promising appearance, surrounded by a garden, and in every respect snug and unexceptionable. We had so lived in hopes of finding this house, and so thoroughly made up our minds to stop therein, that we were nearly riding at once into the enclosure as if we had been invited and expected. We were discreet enough, though, to consider that the worthy Armenian might possibly be a little startled at the unexpected apparition of such a party, so detached K—— as a deputation to present our compliments, and accept the invitation which we doubted not would follow.

J—— and myself remained without the gate to take care of the steeds, and to expect the result of our embassy. We exchanged congratulations on the good

fortune of having brought up in such snug quarters, and agreed that we were all right now. If the Seraph could not receive us himself, he would be sure to know some family of the place which would, on his recommendation, receive us. But after some few minutes we began to think our messenger was a long time away, and I determined to have a peep at what was going on. I entered the garden, and saw at once that the work was in no prosperous condition—the letter was not even yet read. The worthy merchant had evidently been disturbed in the prosecution of culinary duties, for a vessel of water was before him, and a lettuce in his hand. He had taken a good look at K——, who was not quite unabashed at this cold reception, and was now minutely inspecting the letter before opening it. Like most moneyed men, he was very silent and very deliberate. At last he got the length of opening the letter, and slowly read it through. This being achieved, it did not seem to occur to him that it was necessary to say anything to us. The scene was such a one as might take place at the reception of some poor relative by a rich London merchant.

"Signore Seraph," said K——, "our friend John gave us this letter to you, because he thought you might like to be of some service to us during our short visit."

"What can I do for you?"

"You can tell us of some house where we can put up for the night."

"I do not know any such house. There is none such in Magnesia."

"You cannot mean to say that none will receive the friends of your countryman John."

"Gentlemen, you must go to the *khan*. I know of no place but the *khan*. In the *khan* you will find excellent accommodation." And having said thus much, he recommenced scuttling about among his cookery, and fairly turned the cold shoulder on the whole party of strangers.

Now this gentleman was a bad specimen of his kind, thus to dishonour the recommendation of his very respectable friend at Smyrna; or perhaps something had gone wrong with him that day on 'Change. Certain it is that such a reception we had never before experienced. In every place to which we had come, we had always found some one who, for love or money, was glad to receive us. In more than one case it had been for the former consideration; and indeed in some villages it is the recognised privilege of the greatest man to receive the wayfarer. It is to them a rare occasion of playing the entertainer, and gives them an opportunity of hearing all sorts of travellers' tales. Besides, it is a good office, which they themselves may require at any time; and it is, even on sordid grounds, good policy for them to establish relations of hospitality throughout the country. One case is in my recollection, where a large party of us, with I know not how many followers

and horses, were received most cheerfully, though arriving at a late hour and in such formidable numbers. The most hospitable attention was paid to us, and abundant provision of all kinds made; and at our departing our entertainers would receive no penny of recompense. And other such can I remember, though none perhaps where the demand was so strong.

Rejected from the gate of the Seraph, whom we voted a barbarian and a curmudgeon, our ambition resolved itself into the anxiety to reach the *khan* before they shut up for the night. Our new acquaintance, who had guided us to this inhospitable threshold, was waiting for us outside, as though in distrust of our being received. He stuck by us like a good man and true, till he had conducted us far away to the upper part of the town, where lies the *khan*.

We saw a large building, with a frontage something like Newgate. On a rude sort of divan, in the doorway, sat the Khandgi smoking, who gave not the least sign of noticing our approach. Through the doorway we had a perspective view of an inner court of considerable extent, in different parts of which glimmered the cheerful blaze of fire and lamp. Several people were passing to and fro, and altogether the place looked far more lifelike than the dull streets through which we had been passing.

Our friend approached and saluted the Khandgi,

who returned the compliment with all grave civility. A colloquy then followed on the subject of ourselves, during which the Turk read our personal presentments with some apparent interest. It probably required some scrutiny to convince him that men travelling thus unattended were not vagabonds. Perhaps the same idea had something to do with the shortcomings of our friend the Seraph. In the present case the result was of a more satisfactory kind, for the Khandgi uttered a courteous welcome, and motioned to us to dismount. Our friend, to whom we had previously explained our necessities, told us that, in consideration of his request, the Khandgi would take the trouble of supplying our wants in the way of eating, though, as the bazaar was long since closed, we should have to wait some time for our supper. We were only too glad to hear that there was any prospect of a refection, and thanking him heartily for his good offices, we entered the caravansera.

Immediately at the entrance of this hostelry was an uncommonly snug little apartment, wherein many of the more sociable of the guests were taking their baccy. Our will was very good to have made a temporary lodgment here while the more substantial repast was in course of preparation. But we followed the respectable gentleman to whose care we had been consigned. Our luggage was not very cumbersome, consisting only of our saddles and holsters, which we

were able to remove at once, as the two hours' patrolling had quite cooled the horses. Poor things! they had still to wait for their provender; for though we signified that we wished them to be fed directly, the authorities gave us to understand that they must wait. They have a great objection in these parts to feed any particular horse, or horses, except at the same time with all the others, believing that those of the animals who have nothing to eat, hearing the others chumping their corn, are made envious. It is but fair to them to say that they are very kind to the brute creation. To their care we left our quadrupeds awhile, and ascended to what was to be our chamber. We passed along an extensive gallery with a great many doors, at one of which our conductor stopped and produced a large key. We were introduced to a moderately capacious cell, entirely bare of furniture, but quite clean. Of this room and key we were put into possession, and throwing down our traps, made ourselves comfortable. It was exactly like the cell of a prison—massy stone walls, with one little aperture by way of window, which, however, was not barred, neither was it glazed, at which we were not astonished, for glass is hereaway an expensive, or at least an unusual, luxury. The character of the *khan* is consistently observed throughout, as we learnt subsequently more particularly—viz., that of a place which affords necessities, but no superfluities — nothing portable. House and home you

cannot easily carry about with you, and these the public institution provides; but all things edible, or wearable, or convenient, you must provide for yourself.

Our good friend brought a lamp, which he set upon the floor; and as the evening was coolish, and the cell had the air of not having been tenanted for a long time, we signified to him that a fire would be agreeable. Having made the exception in our favour, in virtue of which he had undertaken to supply our various necessities, he set about fulfilling his contract with a good will, and seemed only anxious to know what he could do for us. We pointed to the bare floor, and insinuated an appeal to him, as a man of honour and a gentleman, whether such a couch did not admit of improvement. It is very probable that he uttered in his sleeve some objurgation on Frankish luxury, that could not be contented to sleep as other people did, or at any rate to provide *capotes* like other people. But he signified to us his intelligence of our meaning and his ready acquiescence; and soon entered a satellite laden with rugs, on which a prince might have reposed, to say nothing of a weary traveller.

Behold us, then, stretched on our couches around the fire, soothing our spirits with that best of smoking inventions, the nargillé. The providing of these, and of coffee, *without sugar*, came within the legitimate province of the Khandgi, who keeps a *café* in the

establishment; everything else that he may give you is of pure grace. Should anybody in these travelling days be ignorant of the constitution of a nargillé, let him understand that it is a smoking device on the same principle as a hookah, but marvellously superior in effect. The smoke is drawn through water by means of a long snake-like tube. Herein lieth its agreement with the Indian vanity; but the difference is this, that instead of the sickly composition, half rose-leaves, half guava jelly, that composes the chillum of the hookah, the nargillé is fed with pure tobacco, of a particular kind, indeed, and passing by a particular name, but still a veritable specimen of the genus *nicotiana*. It is called *timbooké*, and professes to come only from Persia.

We were not left long in undisturbed possession of our apartment. The key had been made over to us with much formality, but we soon found that our tenancy was understood to imply no right of seclusion. The news of our arrival had spread, and sundry of the other inhabitants of the *khan* were smitten with the desire of seeing what sort of animals these were who travelled in such fashion. Our door opened, and first one man, and then another, entered in the most unconcerned style. It was highly amusing to see how coolly they walked in: some saluted us, and some did not; some brought their pipes or nargillés, with which they squatted on the floor, and watched us. As we could not talk to them, they talked to

one another about us, staring at the same time with all their eyes, and pointing unconstrainedly to the individual or object that happened for the time being to engage their curiosity. Many addressed inquiries to us, and shrugged their shoulders at our ignorance of a language with which, probably, they had never before met any one unacquainted. These gentlemen, be it remembered, were not of the sober inhabitants, but chance occupants of the inn—merchants and vagabonds of all kinds. Merchants among them always are vagabonds,—men who travel with their wares from one place to another, according to the complexion of markets.

We were at least as much amused at marking them as they were with us, and not much more constrained in our personal observations. Many an equivocal compliment fell harmless on their ears, which, had it been understood, would have ruffled their smiles. At last an individual entered, who evidently came on business. He made a short announcement to us, and waited for a reply. Of course no reply was forthcoming, except some general invitation to sit down and make himself happy. This he was by no means disposed to do. He repeated his words with an emphasis that seemed to imply that he was not to be trifled with, and that it was no use pretending not to understand him. He exemplified what I suppose to be a general fallacy of our nature, —for I have often encountered the same anomaly,—

that is to say, he repeated his words slowly and emphatically, as if one, though ignorant of the language, could not fail to comprehend his meaning, if expressed clearly and deliberately. We were brought no whit nearer to a sense of the emergency.

As in despair he continued to repeat one word, "Aiván, aiván," in a tone that appealed to our every sympathy as reasonable beings, we felt the full indecorum of our continued unintelligence, and would gladly have compounded by appearing to understand, and allowing the event to work itself out. But this would not satisfy our friend: there was evidently something to be done by us.

"Aiván, aiván!" shouted the assistants, in chorus.

It was useless. The word was not in our vocabulary. He now began to gesticulate vehemently, passing his hand several times over his face, and performing other evolutions. These to me, I confess, conveyed no meaning; but K——, being of quicker apprehension, somehow extracted from the pantomime an idea of the fact.

"Depend upon it, he means something about the horses."

S—— improved upon this suggestion, turning to account the extra knowledge that he possessed of the ways of these people. "I have it. He means where are the halters for our horses. These are never provided in the *khan* stables, and all travellers take them for themselves."

Here we were at fault: none of us had been provident of this article, and we wanted words to beg the stableman to provide, if he could, the halters, and put them in the bill. In the midst of our perplexity a man entered, whom we hailed as a friend in need. He was a Greek, unmistakable by physiognomy, even had he not been so by dress. How delightful it was to find a channel of communication reopened, those only can judge who, like us, have been deprived of the uses of speech. Our words became, indeed, ἔπεα πτερόεντα. In a trice he explained to us the whole matter, which was as we had supposed. He appeared to be quite proud of the distinction of being the only person who could communicate with us, and assumed the office of interpreter with great gusto. Through him we explained that we should like to pay a visit to the stables, and the groom summoned us at once to follow him. The company all cleared out as we rose—partly from civility, and partly because they wanted to see a little more of us. We did not in the least doubt the honesty of these gentry; but seeing that so little ceremony existed as to right of entry into our apartment, we did not know but that some unscrupulous person might take advantage of our absence to overhaul our effects. We therefore judged it prudent to remove those of our effects which might most strongly provoke their cupidity. Our saddles were heavy, and could not easily be pocketed, but our pistols might have been stowed away under

their voluminous dresses, and carried off without the observation of the Khandgi. These, therefore, we carried with us, and with such garniture I personally cut a pretty figure. My weapons were so prodigiously long, that their butt-ends considerably overtopped the boundary of my pockets, and gave me thoroughly the air of a highwayman. The exhibition amazed us, but did not appear to strike the natives as extraordinary, who doubtless thought that such was the ordinary walking attire of our nation.

The unintelligible groom walked foremost with a lantern, and led us across the great quadrangle of the *khan* to his particular domain. It was a right good stable, comfortable and clean, and in which a horse might rejoice himself. It was full of horses and asses and camels—for which last species of animal a stable is only an occasional luxury. Generally, the track of these hardy brutes lies where there is no stable to be found, and they are wont to travel in such numbers as to defy any ordinary bounds of habitation. Here they seemed to be quiet neighbours, and not at all offensive to the smaller quadrupeds. Once on the spot, we managed to get over the difficulty of the halters, and as the time of feeding was approaching, we led our steeds out to water. The poor shoeless one was sensibly the worse for his journey, and stuck out his off fore-leg in a manner that boded ill for the morrow. However, they all took their corn well, so we bade them good night, and

hoped for the best. As we were out, we pursued our peregrinations a while, and inspected the domestic economy of the establishment. The building occupied a large square, with the court open in the middle. The stables and other offices occupied most of the ground floor, though some little room was left for public apartments. The gallery, on one side of which we were lodged, extended round the court, and was throughout divided into separate guest-chambers. These were all, like ours, solid square cells, affording the accommodation of four walls, and a pan for fire. Besides this, each room contained a water pitcher, and this was the sum of furniture. We promenaded for some time up and down the gallery, and peeped into many open doors, so that we saw several samples. In one or two of these we saw parties of travellers, on whom we gazed with as little ceremony as had been used towards ourselves, and with as little offence. They certainly were worth looking at, for they were wild fellows, collected from no one knows where, and looked uncommonly picturesque. At last our host brought in the supper, for which we were particularly well-disposed. We were at no time fastidious, and at that precise moment of most indulgent mood toward all cooks. But the mess that appeared almost baffled appetite. Turkish cookery, as practised by the great, is first-rate in its kind. But if this supper was a fair sample of their homely fare, I should not be ambitious of again proving the cookery of a *khan*.

It was presented in a tub of vile aspect, which one would have scrupled to admit to the office of a pediluvium, and which certainly any respectable scullion would have rejected from the service of washing dishes. Its contents were of the most suspicious character. In a greasy soup floated fragments of animal substance, corresponding in texture and form to the parts of no edible creature within our knowledge. This was garnished with anchovies, and a goodly loaf of bread, which last article was beyond reproach. Of course, we had no spoons or forks, so we tucked up our sleeves and dived into the soup. That which had offended the sight proved yet more vile in the tasting; yet since it pretty well quenched all desire to eat, it in some sort, after all, did the duty of a supper.

All was quiet in the *khan* at an early hour, and nothing disturbed our slumbers. Early the next morning we rose and wandered forth into the town. It is a happy custom for the traveller, that the Mussulmans are careful to place a fountain near all places of public resort, for thus has he always means of performing in some sort his ablutions. What with the fountain and a Turkish bath, we contrived to put ourselves into condition for the emergencies of the day. The first thing was to sally forth into the bazaar in search of a breakfast. Here we made it out on *kabobs*, and a sort of cake like a large crumpet—the cake doing the office of a plate. *Kabobs* are things

better in a story than in manducation, being excessively greasy compositions of odd pieces of meat stuck on skewers—a poor imitation of the sausage. We found the town rising in our estimation as we viewed it by daylight. The bazaar does not, of course, afford such a display of rich merchandise as is to be found in that of Smyrna. There is no show of costly carpets and silks from Brousa and Damascus. But the town, *quoad* town, is decidedly superior to the Asiatic metropolis. The streets are wider, the buildings more substantial, the vagabonds not so many. All looks clean and respectable. Here is no bustle of commerce, no appearance of social fermentation. All has the quiet and settled air of a place where the inhabitants have made their fortunes, and retire to enjoy themselves. Seclusion and blissful ignorance have preserved them from the crotchets of reformers, and continued to them the benefits of a wholesome despotism.

But a sound burst upon our ears which made us start. A gush of music as from a full military band was borne upon the air; and in good tune and measure, moreover, did it sound. We knew that we were in a country accustomed to raise any given number of soldiers at short notice—but irregulars, wont to be disbanded on the termination of their special service. But the case turned out to be that Magnesia was a grand cavalry depot. We followed the sound and came up with the regiment, returning

to their barracks. A noble appearance they presented. The horses were first-rate, and the men fine strapping fellows, who looked as if they could do the State some service. We stood at the corner of a street past which they were marching, and had a good view of them. It was a very strong regiment, with a full complement of a thousand men. Their uniform was of the new school—that is to say, after the European model. The specimens of the regular infantry that are to be seen at Smyrna and Constantinople, give but an unfavourable idea of the Turkish troops of the line. It becomes them little to be cross-belted after our fashion; and they seem to be sulky under the constraint of their accoutrements. But these horsemen rode by in gallant style, showing, as occasion arose, excellent horsemanship, and gathering perhaps some vivacity from the noble animals, whose curvetings demanded a vigilant eye and firm seat. After all, cavalry seems to be their natural strength, as it has been ever since the days when they rode wild in the plains of the Selinga. The natural genius of the people may be sufficiently understood by a comparison of the gallant-looking, serviceable dragoons, with the sluggish fellows who carry the musket. They seem to be no more the stuff whereof infantry is to be composed, than they are the stuff of which sailors are to be composed. At this latter transmutation many efforts have recently been made, and a good deal certainly effected, so far as regards the mechanical duties of the sailor. All

who were in presence with the Capitan Pasha lately on the coast of Syria, were surprised at the improved state of their powers of nautical evolution. But this is merely an effort, whose effects cannot last, for the stuff is not in them of which a sailor is made. Their look and bearing is enough to condemn them immediately, and, moreover, enough to show that the training is by no means agreeable to them. Now all these dragoons looked as if their occupation was exactly to their taste, and as if they were proud of their horses and themselves. The only absurdity on the parade (for there was an absurdity, or it would have been contrary to all Turkish precedent) was, that after the colonel—as gallant-looking a fellow as one would wish to see—came his pipe-bearer, with the tools of his craft strapped to his back. This certainly did come at the tail of the procession with something of the air of an anti-climax.

We followed closely after them to see the fun, and arrived at the parade-ground before the barracks just as they had dismounted, and were walking about their horses to cool. We had some little hesitation about venturing among them, for they have curious notions on the subject of the evil eye; and it had happened to one of our friends to get a particularly good pummelling from some soldiers, merely for looking attentively at their horses. But these men were very civil, and even invited our approach. One or two of the officers spoke to us. Presently came a man who beckoned

us to follow him, which we did without the least idea of whither it was that we were bound. He led us right across the parade-ground, and into the grand entrance of the barracks. Here we were received by a gentleman who addressed us in Italian, and informed us that he was the head physician to the regiment, and the particular friend of the colonel, who was waiting up-stairs to receive us. Up-stairs we went, the doctor preceding us, and volunteering to interpret. The room was a most delightful retreat from the glaring heat of the day. The floor was coolly matted, the walls were nearly bare, the sun was excluded, and nothing hot met the eye. The colonel was sitting on the divan at the upper end of the room. He rose as we entered, and received us most politely. I call him *colonel* to express the fact of his being at the head of a regiment. But in truth he was a much greater man than such a title is wont to describe. Not only was his regiment so strong in numbers, but he was the military governor of the town; his correct style in their own language is Miralāhi.

We could see plainly enough that he was a person of some consequence, but the Italian doctor was determined to leave us, if possible, no chance of a mistake in this matter. He interlarded his internunciary discourse with a continual annotation of asides, which became monstrously amusing, seeing that they were spoken in full audience of the individual who was

their unsuspecting subject. He impressed on our serious consideration that the colonel was a very great man indeed, able to do pretty well what he liked in Magnesia; and we were to take note that he, the doctor, could do what he liked with the colonel. I do not know whether he handed over our speeches to the colonel in a more genuine state than we were quite sure he did those of the colonel to us, from the quantity of alloy that we were able to detect. It is probable that at least he polished our compliments, and somewhat exaggerated our conditions. At any rate we were a very pleasant party, and seemed mutually satisfied with our conversation. After a considerable interval, during which we had partaken of his hospitable cheer, we arose to depart. But he would not allow us to go, saying that English officers visiting that strange place must be his guests. He would first show us the barracks, and then we must go home with him and dine. This proposal delighted us much, and we bowed a willing assent. We had the curiosity to inquire how he had been made aware of our arrival, as he evidently must have been, by the token of his having recognised us on the parade-ground, and having sent to us the invitation. He told us that in the routine of his daily reports, our descriptions had been presented to him as having arrived at the *khan*, so that when he saw us he knew who we must be.

Presently we proceeded to inspect the barracks.

Nothing could be nicer or better kept than they were in all respects. No English barracks could be cleaner or better ventilated. We saw also some of the officers' quarters, which spoke well for the taste of the occupiers. The band, we found, was composed entirely of natives. We had supposed that the master of the band at least would have been a foreigner, but were assured that Turkish skill, unassisted, had the training of the musicians, and even the composition of much of the music. We went into the kitchen and tasted the men's dinner, which was ready prepared. It was a most excellent soup or hotch-potch, that Meg Dods herself might have owned. Thence we went to the stables, and here all was admirable. One might be bold to say that no European regiment is better mounted. The colonel's special stud was a noble collection, in whose exhibition he had evidently much pride. We wound up our inspection with a visit to the hospital, which we found the most admirable part of their menage. This was the doctor's own province, and he minutely exhibited particulars. I have seen a great many hospitals in my day, and am able to judge that this was excellent. The building was of no pretence, but substantial convenience was consulted. It was quite spacious enough for ventilation; and the beds were all clean and comfortable, and disposed at sufficiently wide intervals. This establishment is governed in chief by the Italian doctor; but the second in direction, the surgeon as

they term him, and all the other functionaries are native Turks. The dispensary is excellently well kept, and among its duties is the keeping of a regular sick-register. This details in form the malady and treatment of each patient: so that satisfactory information concerning any particular inmate may as readily be obtained here as in any London hospital, and medical precedents as certainly established.

This register our friend had the complaisance to submit to our inspection, and we were astonished at the exactitude of its detail. He told us that among his duties is that of making a regular nosological return to Government periodically, and a report of the number of deaths, with their respective causes. Few people would have been prepared to find the exhibition of so much solicitude for the life and wellbeing of the private soldier, on the part of the Turkish Government. Such humanised policy is at least wonderfully in contrast with all that we hear of the domestic economy of these people but a few years back, and with what, by all accounts, was the method pursued in the armies of Mehemet Ali. The habits of the Turkish soldiers are very dirty, in spite of the ablutions to which they are constrained by their religion, which affect only their arms and legs. Of the benefits of clean linen they are in mere ignorance, and their fatalism is the spring of all kinds of indiscretion. Think of seven or eight hundred such fellows congregated in a barrack, with more

than the probability that some one of the number may have brought with him, from his dirty home, the contagion of fever, perhaps of plague, and it will be easy to conceive how great and constant must be the care that can maintain them in tolerable health and comfort—a care that must subsist not only in the hospital, but be extended over all arrangements affecting them.

The healthy and active appearance of the men was the best presumptive evidence of the excellence of their *régime*. Had we even left Magnesia without positive witness of their barrack economy, we should have felt sure that these men must be ably officered and well looked after. It is, with regiments as with ships, a standing truth that efficiency of condition is compatible only with efficiency and sympathy on the part of the officers. The grand secret of our naval discipline is the recognition of this truth; and nowhere does it find a more full exemplification than on board our ships. There every officer (every *good* officer) feels for and with his men. Nothing save the positive requirement of the service is allowed to interfere with their comfort. The care of their health is as much the ambition and duty of the captain as is the care of his ship. Few things in the strange world afloat would strike a landsman more than the minute attention habitually paid to men who are hourly liable to the most perilous risks. At the need of the service limb and life are freely ventured, but

not a wet jacket is inflicted, nor a meal prorogued wantonly. Jack, who is burdened with no care for himself, becomes devoted to his officers, who care for him—ready at their bidding to jump overboard, or to turn to and get the mainmast out all standing. A well-ordered man-of-war, where this feeling prevails from the quarter-deck to the forecastle, affords perhaps the finest exhibition of harmony of purpose of which our nature is capable. The inspection of a single regiment is insufficient ground whereon to found general observations, but so far as this one specimen is concerned, we can speak of the Turks as having made some slight approach to this most desirable condition. We were surprised to find an Osmanli in the position of surgeon to the establishment, because the religious principles of such a one are understood to be invincibly opposed to the prosecution of the studies that must qualify for such a post. Without dissection what can they know of anatomy? and unskilled in anatomy, how can they guide the knife healingly among the intricacies of the human frame? Yet all the operative surgery in this hospital is the care of the native surgeon, by whom the most formidable operations are successfully performed. The best proof that these medicos are up to their work, is found in the fact that the sick-list was very small. It was quite surprising to see how few beds were occupied. Indeed the men are so well clothed, well fed, and lodged so airily, that their tenure of

health must be far more secure when on service than when in their own homes.

Our inspection had occupied some time, and brought the day well on to the hour of dinner. The hospitable colonel having right courteously satisfied all our inquiries, led the way to his domicile. Among the notable experiences of this day, it was not the least that he himself by his presence afforded us, enabling us to mark the tone of feeling subsisting between himself and his men. I will defy any harsh taskmaster to take me among his men and prevent my reading in their demeanour the fact of his ungentleness. Aversion and constrained fear are motives too powerful for the possibility of suppression in the presence of their object. The eye is too faithful an index of the soul to give no spark when the fire of hatred rages within. But as we passed through the different buildings, every eye expressed cheerfulness and satisfaction. They seemed pleased at our curiosity, and gratified with his visit. He himself seemed delighted to play the part of exhibitor. He walked through the different compartments, not exactly with the air of an English dragoon, but still with a good deal of the soldier about him. Take him all in all, he was one of the two best specimens of Turkish great men that I have seen. The first place I reserve for my excellent friend the Pasha of Rhodes. With all his slouching, happy-go-lucky air, it was astonishing to see how much grace he managed to preserve, and

how the sense of authority was kept up, notwithstanding the simplicity of his good humour.

When a man asks you to dinner, unless, indeed, he be a gipsy living under a hedge, it is usual to suppose that you must enter his house. We had reckoned on being introduced to the particular establishment of the Miralāhi, and rejoiced in the prospect of so befitting a conclusion to our morning's researches. But our friend marshalled us onward through stables and gardens to the prettiest little kiosk you would wish to see, snugly ensconced beneath vines and creepers, at one end of his dwelling. Hereaway nature assumes a regularity in her moods of which we Englishmen know little in our own land. Here it really does rain in the rainy reason, and really is hot in summer. Thus knowing, almost to a degree, the heat or cold they are at any time to expect, the happy indigenous are in condition to suit their manner of life to the humour of the season. This kiosk was the usual summer sitting-room, contrived to a nicety in all respects so as to woo all cooling influences, and exclude the sun. The sides were open towards that quarter whence the breeze was wont to come, and a beautiful fountain threw up its abundant stream so near to us that we almost received its splashing. We were raised somewhat above the level of the garden, which lent to our enjoyment the blended odours of lemon and citron. No carpet was there, nor woollen substance, nor aught that looked

hot. Cool mats covered the tesselated floor within, and without the eye was refreshed by gushing water, and by the deep green of the orange and lemon trees. Truly, one might be in a worse billet on a hot day!

But nothing edible appeared, nor any table, nor other appliance whose presence we are wont to associate with the idea of dinner. One might almost have supposed the kiosk to be the drawing-room reserved for the collecting together of the guests before their proceeding to the banquet. Our host had picked up another friend in the course of the morning, so that, with ourselves and the doctor, he had a very respectable party.

We had been but a short time sitting in that state of palpable waiting for dinner, which from St James's to Otaheité is one and the same recognised misery, when our host propounded to us, through the doctor, the following thesis:—

"There are different modes of dining, according to different nations." The proposition was axiomatic: we looked assent, and waited for what was to come next.

"The English have their way, the French theirs, and the Turks theirs. How will you dine to-day?"

"Like true Osmanlis," we cried, emphatically and enthusiastically. "Truly, mine host, we have capital appetites, and, moreover, an old proverb on our side."

Now, it is not to be supposed that this worthy gentleman could really have given us an entertain-

ment in the styles he offered. No doubt it was but a conventional phrase, and meant no more than the speech of the Mexican does, who tells you to consider his house and all he possesses as your own: still it was civil. A sign was made to one of the domestics, and significant preparations were forthwith commenced. Each of us was furnished with a napkin, which we spread out upon our knees. We further followed lead so far as to tuck up our sleeves: then came a pause. Presently arrived an attendant, bringing an apparatus much like a camp-stool, which was planted in the midst of us, and on the top of this was anon deposited a large and bright brass tray. On this, in a twinkling, appeared a basin filled with a savoury composition of kind unknown. Into this all hands began to dig. It was uncommonly good indeed, and disposed one for another taste. But almost before a second taste could be had, the dish had vanished and was succeeded by another. And so it was throughout the repast: the first momentary pause in the attack was the signal for removal of the reigning basin, and the production of another. There could not have been less than eighteen or twenty dishes in all—most of them quite capital, and deserving of more serious attention than the bird-like pecking for which alone space was allowed. On the whole, it was a style of thing which would hardly suit men seriously hungry; but it suits these fellows well enough, who, as they never take more exercise

than they can help, may be supposed never to know what downright hunger is. Among their *plats* was one of pancakes, made right artistically, and as though in regard of Shrovetide. We wound up with a bowl of sherbet, or some variety of that genus, for the consumption of which we were allowed the use of spoons. It would be pleasant enough to dine with them, were it not for the barbarity of eating with one's fingers—an evil which their notions of hospitality tend still further to aggravate. On occasions when they wish to do particular honour to a guest, it is their custom to pick tit-bits out of the dish, perhaps to roll up such morsels in a ball, and pop them into the stranger's mouth. Sometimes the attentive host will dig his fingers into the mass, and pile up the nicest pieces on the side of the dish, ready for your consumption, and this by way of saving you the trouble of selection. Happy were we that our friendly entertainer was content with this milder exhibition of benevolence; for it did not require any great ingenuity to pretend a mistake as to the identity of *morceaux*. The malicious doctor seemed bent on making us undergo this trial, and did his best, with winks and whispers, to rob us of our ignorance. Very kind was this good Miralāhi to us. We sat long, and talked much with him, and he was urgent in invitations to us to prolong our stay in the city. The inducement that he held out was certainly tempting — nothing less than the promise that he

would have, on our especial behoof, a grand review of all his troops. Had we been free to follow our will, we should most assuredly have accepted his invitation, as well for the sake of its kindness, as because the chance of such a review is not to be met with every day. He did give us a military spectacle in a small way. In the course of conversation he fell upon some inquiries concerning the cutlass exercise, and requested illustrations. He then called one of his dragoons, and put him through the cavalry sword exercise, after their manner: and a particularly ferocious-looking exercise it was.

But the time was now come when we must bid farewell to the good colonel; and we did so with a cordial sense of his hospitality, and a great increase of respect for him as an officer. He pursued us with his good offices, sending the doctor to the *khan* with us to assist us in a settlement there, and giving us good counsel for our progress. He tried very seriously at first to dissuade us from attempting a start so late in the day, as he conceived it would be impossible for us to reach Manimen, whither we were bound, that night. It is a fact that travelling after dark is not safe in Turkey; indeed, you would hardly be allowed, after nightfall, to pass a guard-house. But we were determined to take our chance of doing the distance within the time, as we knew well that the number of hours allowed by authority were very much beyond the mark of what we should

take. Like a truly hospitable man, when he found us bent on departing, he set himself to speed our departure. His friend the doctor was at the trouble of repeating to us several times, till we had pretty well learned them by rote, some of the most necessary inquiries for food and provender in the vernacular. When we had written these down in the characters, and after the orthography of our mother-tongue, we felt fully prepared for all contingencies.

How different was the spirit of our departure from that of our entry! Not four-and-twenty hours since we had ridden into the town, unnoticed and unsheltered; we were now almost pained to say farewell. So short a time had sufficed to work the difference between desolation and good-fellowship. And though this instance be but of a feebly marked and almost ludicrous difference, you have but to multiply the degrees, and you arrive at a picture of what is every day happening in the course of the long journey on which we are all engaged. A man is stricken and mourning to-day, because he is desolate; to-morrow he is radiant with joy, because he has found a soul with which he can hold fellowship. The spirit makes music only as the spheres do, in harmony. When I have thought of these things, and felt that they tend to the cultivation of human sympathies, it has seemed to me that I might draw a moral lesson even from the recollection of my "Ride to Magnesia."

ALAND—THE BALTIC IN 1854.

BY THE LATE COLONEL CHARLES HAMLEY, R.M.

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I.

AT the entrance of the Gulf of Bothnia, and about midway betwixt the coasts of Sweden and Finland, covering much of the intervening space with a network of islands, stands the Aland group. Detached from the great thoroughfares of the world, unimportant in itself, offering few facilities for commerce, and apparently no temptation to conquest, this little spot would, it might be thought, have retained the seclusion which nature had assigned it. Man's history, however, proves that no isolation of position, no poverty, no obscurity or inoffensiveness, is security against the aims of ambition or the aggression of power. A country may lie apart from the great tracks and roadways—its people keep aloof from the great conflicting interests and great struggles, and yet attract the desires of some conqueror, as an outwork to his possessions, or a pasturage for his flocks;

he wants it for an advanced post, a barrier, a citadel, or a "garden of herbs," and straightway it becomes his.

Thus has it fared with the poor Alanders. The very position which seemed to promise privacy and impunity, has brought upon them again and again the presence of war, and provoked the disturbance of their primitive state, by more than ordinary vicissitudes and transitions. Once a kingdom—so says tradition—the sovereignty, perhaps, of some northern erl or viking, whose ships found a snug refuge in its numerous coves and fiords; then, following the fortunes of its neighbour Finland, a dependency of Sweden, or rather a unit in its federation of races; then overrun by Russian soldiers, converted into a military station, and placed under the rule of a nation alien in sympathies, laws, and blood,—this little island aggregation becomes at last the scene of a war in which neither its interest nor its patriotism is involved. Russia was only an invader; England and France were strangers, known only through some vague idea of power or wealth.

The rule of Sweden seems to have been mild and easy. Under it the Alanders lived their simple lives in peace and content. The natural character of their country compelled a primitive state of society, and favoured a pastoral life. There was no inlet, no outlet for the tide of civilisation. There was not only the natural island separation, but the group was so intersected and dissected by water, and each islet was

again so cut up by loch and morass, that not only it but every farm almost had an isolation of its own. Thus even the progress which arises from internal traffic and communication was checked. The land lies in a succession of meadows, with marshy pools in the midst, and edged by rocky wooded ridges, which run like headlands and promontories into the grassy plains. These meadows afford pasturage for the cattle required for draught or winter store; the plateaux and slopes offer spots for limited tillage; the pine plantations give fuel; the lakes have fish; the meres bring water-fowl; so that there is enough, and enough only, within their narrow demesnes for their own wants. There is little product for export —little demand on foreign markets.

This primitive state, this simplicity, without savagery or barbarism, has been ever a favourite topic of poets and pastoral romancists. They have fondly pictured it as a primal natural stage—a sort of standpoint, where man arrived at the height of innocence, happiness, and content, and thence emerged into all the vices, luxuries, and ambition attendant on civilisation. Delusion we know this to be; and yet there is something attractive even in the idea of a state where man pretends to no higher dignity than that of labour, and is surrounded by no artificialities of rank, ceremonies, or etiquette; where his vices and passions, though perhaps no less than in other stages, are still simple in their development; where,

"For man light labour spreads her wholesome store,
Just gives what life requires, but gives no more."

The poor Alanders possessed, perhaps, all that was ever real in such a state—the simplicity, labour, and frugality. Their labour might be light, but it was constant and various. In the spring and autumn many of the men went forth in fishing-boats, or as pilots to the ships which carried on the traffic in the smaller ports on the coasts of Sweden and Finland, and with their earnings brought back some small provision for the winter. Meanwhile tillage and harvest went on, for the gudewives took more than a share of field toil, and allowed not the absence of their lords to check the progress of husbandry. The winter brought its peculiar avocations. There was the care of store cattle; the fishing through holes in the ice, or with deep nets underneath it; the shooting or trapping of wild-fowl or eider-duck. In the long winter nights, too, the indoor work began; the men manufactured harness, farm and domestic implements, for each man was his own artisan, and had manual skill enough to meet the needs of his labour. The women wove and spun their own coarse woollen garments, picked and sorted the down and feathers of the birds, and salted the fish. Then there were the little festivities, and the simple sports on the ice, to fill up the picture of primitive life.

The Alanders, like the Finns, were good sailors, but seem not to have been fond of roving far from

home, and confined their seamanship to the navigation of their own bays and fiords, or occasional pilotage of the gulf. There was no frequent communication with the opposite shores, but there was kindness and neighbourliness on both sides. Thus year after year passed on, bringing its chronicle of births, deaths, and marriages, but little other change in the condition of the Aland group.

Their time was coming. The war, which was convulsing great principalities and powers, obtruded its movements even on their obscurity. In 1808, Russia seized the opportunity of aggression, and stretched forth her hand towards Finland and Aland. Her armies soon overran them. Sweden for a time drove back the invasion, but in the following year both were ceded to Russia, and the Alanders found themselves finally separated from the nation under whose rule they had lived so long and so peacefully.

To Russian policy Aland was more a military outpost than a colony: it was to be a stepping-stone—a starting-point to more extensive conquest. It was therefore held only by a sufficient garrison; and though the inhabitants stared, perhaps, to see grim fortresses and military buildings starting up on the shores where they had dried their nets or beached their boats, and groaned at first under the petty inflictions of martial occupation, yet the strangers were too few to effect any innovation in their social usages; and another revolution of destiny found them little

altered in habits or condition. The name and locality became familiar to many who had scarcely ever heard of either before, when war with Russia arose before us as a great fact, and men's minds began to grow busy with the questions of assault and defence. Speculators on the Baltic operations fixed upon Aland as the first point of attack, and there was much reason in the supposition. It was at once the most assailable of the enemy's possessions, and the most easy of occupation. All the other strongholds—Abo, Revel, Helsingfors—might have been bombarded, but could not have been held except by the aid of a large army, whilst our flying squadron could have effectually cut off all communication betwixt Aland and the mainland, and secured it from attack. Its possession would have afforded our ships a convenient rendezvous—a depot for coals and stores, an hospital establishment for infectious diseases, and a fold or grazing-ground for the cattle, which might then have been collected from every quarter for the use of the fleet. Above all, its capture at the outset of the war would have been hailed as a good first blow; afterwards it was looked upon merely as a compromise for the non-performance of more brilliant exploits. It would have shown the earnest purpose of the war—might have decided wavering allies, and daunted covert foes. Our rulers and chiefs thought otherwise.

Early in the spring of 1854 a mighty armament

went forth for the Baltic—the most perfect that even the might of England had ever sent from her shores. The ships were mostly models of architecture — all were splendidly armed and fairly equipped. The great auxiliary which science had given to seamanship was well and largely applied: the steam-power was abundant. The crews too, though not worthy of the ships, perhaps, were as good, if not better, than those with which Nelson and his captains did their deeds of fame. Every ship had a body of trained gunners—all had in greater or less proportion a certain number of good seamen—drafts from the coast-guard furnished a class of men, not very young or active, but orderly, trustworthy, and used to discipline. These, with the marines, formed a good nucleus. The remainder were certainly an unkindly lot, the scrapings and gatherings from sea-coast and fishing villages—from the highways and byways of inland counties. Bad as these were, they were better than their like in the last war. Our fathers tell us that their ships then were manned by crews, about one-third of whom were men-of-war's-men—that the rest were the scourings of jails and the sweepings of hospitals—men who were sent among them impregnated with vice and disease, and sowed therewith the seeds of mutiny and death. The arms of all description were excellent. The guns were of the newest pattern, the gun-gear of the newest adaptation. Cannon of heavier metal and superior con-

struction occupied the places of the old rickety carronades and 24-pounders,—sights and ranges had exploded the old random haphazard plan of taking aim; an organised system of drill and firing had superseded the old muzzle-to-muzzle practice; well poised cutlasses had replaced the clumsy weapons which swept the decks of the Chesapeake.

The material of our armament, then, was superior in most respects, equal in all, to what it was at the proudest period of our naval power. It remained to be seen whether the qualities developed in the last war were still existing to produce new triumphs, or whether the addition of steam, and the improvements in architecture, armament, and organisation, could counterbalance the lack of them.

The fleet went forth. England looked with just pride on this offspring of its strength. Opportunity, conduct, command, alone seemed wanting to repeat the glory of Copenhagen or Trafalgar. The fleet was fine, and a good spirit animated the men who sailed therein. There was no violent enthusiasm, but an earnest, strong tone of feeling pervaded all ranks. There was enough of experience gathered in the last war, and in the petty struggles which have since given such frequent opportunities to naval action—enough of young impulse and latent enterprise to meet any emergency; and all hands had a steady confidence in themselves and in the force they wielded. The prestige of the past had not quite

lost its inspiration: the names of the old battles had still, for many, a stirring sound; and the record of the old deeds still said to many a heart, "Go and do likewise." There were few who did not believe that the campaign would swell the old annals, and add a glorious day or two to the calendar of victories.

Kiöge Bay was the first rendezvous, and there the rodomontade signal about sharpening cutlasses cast the first shade of doubt over the general confidence. It contrasted harshly with the old Nelson signal, so expressive and so sublime in its simplicity, which had been made so familiar to men's eyes and minds that it seemed the national preparation for battle. But the sight which the combined fleets of France and England presented, when the ships assembled about the middle of June, was one to dispel all doubt, and place hope in the ascendant. Twenty-nine sail of the line floated on the waters of the Baltic. Powerful steam frigates formed an advanced guard, and a host of steamers went hither and thither to reconnoitre, pilot, or blockade, as occasion required. The gulfs were now open, reconnaissances had been made along the shores, and the time for action seemed near at hand. Expectation was at the highest pitch. Conjecture ranged over every possible and impossible point of attack. The more ardent spirits would be satisfied with nothing less than Cronstadt; others would have been content with Revel or Bom-

arsund as a beginning. The movements of the fleets now indicated one project, now another. First, there was the anchoring in Baro Sound, from the islands around which could be seen the towers of Helsingfors, the low battlements of Sveaborg, and the ships lying temptingly behind them. Then there was the grand demonstration before Cronstadt. The French fleet and part of the English—a division being left to watch Helsingfors—sailed and steamed up the Gulf of Finland, and lay for some days within sight of the fortress, challenging the enemy to come forth—a challenge they very wisely declined. Meanwhile, steamers daily carried reconnoitring parties of admirals and official dignitaries as close to the batteries as prudence allowed. Lesser men, who had no steamers at command, were content to scan the position and defences of this *Carthago delenda* from deck or masthead.

The attack was finally pronounced to be impossible, and so, after the place had been well looked at, the ships went back again.

Thus demonstration succeeded demonstration. The summer wore on and no blow was struck. The disaster at Gamla-Carleby, the abortive attack on Hango, and the general inaction, had cast a shade of discouragement over men's minds. Two or three sham attacks on islands and lighthouses, which exhibited much confusion and want of arrangement, lessened their confidence also in the issue of any landing which

might be attempted under the same management. Cholera soon added its depressing influences, and the hopes which were so high in the spring fell lower and lower as the summer advanced.

At last came the report that Bomarsund was to be attacked, and that a French army was coming to make the assurance of conquest doubly sure. A French army! Who wishes for more men? Do not the fleets muster their five thousand bayonets? Do they not contain guns of every description—field-guns, guns of position, heavy battery guns—and men to work them? What more is wanting save engineers, with their skill and materials, and a man to command? The answer to these questions soon came, in the certain intelligence that French troops were embarking in English line-of-battle ships at Calais, and that no less a man than Baraguay d'Hilliers had been appointed to command the expedition. There was then work to be done, and the military jealousy which thought "the fewer men the greater share of honour," was lost in the conviction that the year would not close without an event of war. Led-Sund, the southernmost anchorage in which the intricate passage leading to Bomarsund terminated, was to be the rendezvous, and thither the French, with a portion of the English fleet, consisting of four block-ships and six liners—in all, twenty sail of the line, accompanied by a host of steamers—repaired towards the end of July to await the arrival of the land forces.

The Aland summer was at its height. The sun shone brightly on the calm broad basin of Led-Sund, and the rocky islets which studded it, throwing a sparkle on the waters, and striking out strange lights from the dark foliage of the pines. The scene was peaceful and pretty. A cosy villa or farmhouse with its large outbuildings, peeped forth from green pleasant nooks along the shore; and far down in quiet coves, market and fishing boats were lying on the beach; ponies were grazing on the islets; the windmills were working, and smoke arose from the chimneys—all giving token of continued occupation. The inhabitants either anticipated no danger, or thought it was vain to fly from it.

Each day now brought an event in the arrival of ships of war, filled with the redoubted soldiers of France, and we scanned curiously the looks and demeanour of our future allies—the men whose soldiership was so famous. Lusty English cheers rang out their welcome; the flags of France and England lapped their folds over each other; boats pulled to and fro; cannon thundered out their ceremonial, and the national airs, "Partant pour la Syrie," and "God save the Queen," became familiar sounds. The constant movement, the excitement, the variety and brilliancy of the scene, heightened by the bright sunshine, and the strains of martial music floating through the air, rather suggested the idea of a tournament or some gala spectacle, than of grim preparations for war.

The first onward movement was made by the four block-ships, which were detached from the main body under Admiral Chads, to take up a position in front of Bomarsund, but beyond the reach of its guns. Light steamers patrolled betwixt and around the islands, to cut off reinforcements or supplies from the Finnish shores. Thus the investment was effectually completed. The non-arrival of transports from France, with stores and *matériel*, caused now a short delay. The interval was employed by the authorities in going up and down—up and down, to spy the forts—hopeful, perhaps, that some weak point would disclóse itself; but there they stood in their granite solidity, defying reconnaissance, and inviting attack. Let us follow in the wake of the officials, and have a look for ourselves. On we steam from one bay into another, then on through a narrow passage, where the rocks rise darkly and precipitously on either side, and the pines throw their shadows across us; then follow a thread-like line midst a mosaic-work of islets; then on, on again through narrow passage and islet mosaic-works alternately, until we anchor in the harbour of Bomarsund. A first glance shows how well chosen the spot was as a site for the arsenals, dockyards, and garrisons of a power which aimed at controlling and commanding the Baltic Seas. It was a good fulcrum for the lever which was to lift and shake the northern kingdoms.

The harbour is snug and secure, and has the ad-

vantage of spacious outer anchorages in Lumpar Bay and Led-Sund. The only access from the southward is the passage we have described, which, though offering sufficient depth of water, is difficult to navigate, from its intricacy and narrowness. The northern entrance, straitened by the position of Presto Island, may be easily defended. Thus it may be seen that a naval power possessing one shore of the Gulf of Bothnia, and coveting the other, as well as a preponderance in the Baltic, could not establish a more politic base of operations.

Landward, the position was equally advantageous. Natural enclosures restricted its defence within narrow limits. At the distance of a few miles, an arm of the sea, in conjunction with a chain of lochs, ran from north to south, and almost isolated the promontory on which the fortresses stood, leaving only here and there a narrow causeway as means of communication. Nearer, a similar enclosure offered a second barrier. A third may be said to exist in a rocky ridge which stretches from a point of the northern entrance to the sea-shore, forming almost a line of circumvallation. Art had fixed on this last as the point for its defences. At either extremity of the ridge was built a round tower, and below, on the sea-shore, stood the main work, a large fortified barracks. These three formed an irregular sort of triangle, of which the main work was the apex. On the shores of Presto Island, opposite the northern tower, or Fort

Nortike, was another, and the two effectually guarded the entrance. The guns of Nortike also swept the rear of the main work, and ranged partially over the country beyond the ridge. The main work defended the harbour, and was flanked by the south or Tsee tower. The main road from Castelholm, which passed to the right of the Tsee fort, was only partially commanded by it, and some broken rugged ground around it afforded ready cover for an approach. This was the weak point of the land defence, but it would soon have been strengthened by the completion of an immense pile of fortified buildings, which were to carry on the line towards the sea. The plan was faulty too, in respect that, though the fire of the forts could be well and scientifically combined against an attack by sea, it could not, from their detached position and want of outworks, be concentrated on any one point on the land side, and that therefore the forts were exposed to be taken in detail. Such was the position. The works themselves were novelties in European fortification, and demand a particular description, which may, perhaps, be better given here than hereafter. The round towers were similar in construction, and differed little in size. With their red granite fronts and fine smooth masonry, they presented a formidable appearance of solidity; but as usual with things Russian, the outward semblance was a sham. The granite was only two feet thick, the rest all rubble and brick. The dimensions of

Fort Tsee will answer nearly for all. Its height was about sixty feet, its diameter sixty yards. The outer wall was six feet thick, and the distance from it to the inner one was about sixty-five. Small space, it may be thought, including the thickness of two walls, for the working of guns and the habitation of men; yet there seemed room enough. In the centre was a large court, open to the sky. All the forts had two tiers of casemated guns. The upper was the principal, and, it may be said, the only battery; for the lower tier being within six or seven feet of the ground, its embrasures would offer a tempting opening for assault, and were therefore blocked up with brickwork, which was pierced, however, with loopholes for musketry. In two or three embrasures the guns were retained. A singular feature of the buildings was a sloping roof of sheet-iron, from which protruded windows with wooden shutters, like those in attics. The entrance was by a narrow doorway, defended in front by a barricade of sand-bags and strong palisades, whilst yawning overhead was an ugly circular hole, through which missiles might be hurled on a storming party. This *machicoulis* was formed by a slide, which could be drawn backwards and forwards over the opening, and though clumsily constructed, might have been turned to mischievous effect. The building within was divided into compartments by partition-walls; and entrances from the court led into the galleries, where the guns stood in their casemate chambers,

separated by thick blocks of masonry, and where also were the apartments apportioned to the uses of the garrison. Above the upper tier was a bomb-proof floor, and over it stretched the iron roof. This was evidently used as a sleeping-place by the common soldiers, and the windows were intended as much for the purposes of ventilation as for musketry, though small wall-pieces stood in some of them. Such were the towers. They mounted from twenty to twenty-four guns, chiefly 18- or 24-pounders. A few 32's were found in them, but none of greater calibre. The guns, too, were of old pattern, and their carriages of rude construction.

The principle on which the towers were constructed gave some advantages, but was also productive of much weakness and defect. The guns could certainly range in every direction, but it was not possible to concentrate more than four or five, and an assailant would consequently be enabled to bring his battery to bear against any one point without being opposed to more than a fourth of the strength of the fortress. In addition to this there were the usual disadvantages of casemated batteries, the want of a free passage for the smoke, the consequent difficulty of keeping up a rapid fire, and the murderous effect produced by a shot entering through the embrasures into the confined space of the galleries.

The main work was on a much larger scale, and rather more irregular, as its purpose was to defend the

harbour on every side; and it was therefore necessary that its plan should in some way follow the lay of the shore. It was crescent-shaped, inclining to a sort of gorge at either end, and the rear was closed by a curtain, with a small horse-shoe work abutting from it. The guns from this face partially flanked the towers, and commanded some parts of the ridge. The internal arrangements were the same as in the round towers. The double tier of casemates, the galleries, and the iron roof were all repeated. This work had ninety-two guns, and was capable of holding three thousand men. Betwixt it and Fort Tsee were the masses of unfinished buildings, which, when completed, would have far exceeded all the other fortifications in magnitude and strength.

Thus, then, stood the defensive force of Russia. There was one large fortress and three round towers, placed all in commanding positions, armed with one hundred and eighty guns, garrisoned by two thousand four hundred soldiers, well stored and provisioned. To meet this the allies were prepared to send ten thousand French soldiers, a thousand English, six line-of-battle ships, and a number of steamers.

The odds seemed overwhelming, but the real odds consisted in the power which the allies possessed of cutting off all reinforcements. The capture became thus merely a matter of time; the assailants attacked with a certainty of ultimate success, the besieged defended without hope. Such are ever fearful odds.

II.

Let us return to Led-Sund. Everything was ready there at last. The transports had arrived. Baraguay d'Hilliers had been greeted with huzzahs, music, and cannonading. Preparation and ceremony were at an end. The work was to begin in earnest.

On the 7th of August the troops were sent forward in the different ships towards the scene of action.

The plan of operations was naturally simple enough.

The troops, formed into two divisions, were to land north and south of the place, seize on the chief points of communication, and then, marching by different routes, concentrate and form a complete line of investment, with either flank resting on the sea. Two French line-of-battle ships—one bearing the flag of Admiral Percival Deschenes—and the four English block-ships, Edinburgh, Blenheim, Hogue, and Ajax —were to take up a position in the harbour in front of the main fort, occupying its attention by a distant fire; whilst a flying squadron of steamers, passing and repassing the passages to the northward, made the *cordon* perfect. The round towers were then to be assailed by land batteries, and stormed by the bayonet if necessary, and then the combined force of ships, guns, and soldiers would advance to the grand attack of the great fortress. Such was the plan, and

it was carried out with little deviation, save that the consummation was so rapid as to strike out the effect of the grand *coup* from the closing scene.

Tranvik, a village and bay about four miles south of Bomarsund, and situated within the first enclosure, was the spot chosen for the debarkation of the French division. Thence they were to advance, occupy the Castelholm road and the southern heights, and then push onwards to the village of Nora Finby, which was to be the point of junction.

On the northern shore of the promontory, almost in a line with Tranvik, is a place marked Hulta in the maps. Near this is a small sheltered cove, surrounded by steep rocks and thickly-wooded banks. Here it was arranged that the second division should attempt a landing; and here the steamers conveying this force, having made a detour round Presto Island, anchored as the day closed. This division, commanded by Brigadier-General Harry D. Jones, of the Royal Engineers, consisted of two thousand French marines, and a column of English troops, under the orders of Colonel Graham, composed of a battalion of Royal Marines, eight hundred strong, Captain King's company of sappers and miners, and a body of seamen with field-pieces. As the day broke on the morn of the 8th, the advanced-guard of marines landed on the narrow beach, made their way through the rocky thicket, and gained the open ground beyond without meeting a foe. The mist lifting heavily and slowly, showed

stacks, palings, patches of meadow, and other signs of habitation near us. Presently a bit of a steeple, the side of a windmill, a mass of red roofs, and large looming homesteads, gave us the vague outline of a village, dimmed and mazed by the folds of mist. As our skirmishers passed through the scattered houses, feeling for the enemy, the peasants were just waking up to their labours, and evinced no sign of fear or surprise—no apprehension of violence or plunder. The women came to the doors, the pigs wallowed, and the fowls strutted most temptingly and trustfully before us. The road wound now round an indent of the sea, and there forts Nortike and Presto arose before us, looming grey, grim, and sullen. No shot was fired; and we passed on to make our first halt beside a plantation. The men sat down in groups to munch their biscuit and bacon, and smoke their pipes under a hedge, shady and green enough for the days of merry England. Suddenly there was a sound of wheels. "Field-pieces!" said an alarmist. The sentries erected their muskets fiercely, and the men stood to their arms, when, lo! round a turn of the wood came a pretty pony-carriage driven by a lady, a priest sitting beside her. Our interrogation was imperfect, but their story seemed to run thus: She was a widow; her husband had been killed some time before by one of our shells; she had suffered enough from war, and wished to seek a city of refuge in one of the neighbouring villages. The priest was bent on some errand

of mercy or pastoral duty. Their story was accepted; a passport was given them, and they went on their way rejoicing. Even a little Finnish handmaiden, who came in a little cart behind with some household stuff, and had remained fixed in a state of strong despair from the time she first cast eyes on the soldiers, brightened up as she passed our posts, and smiled and kissed her hands. Such was our share of the adventure. The sequel was more tragic. In the evening (so our allies told the story) they were discovered making their way back to the forts through the French lines, and were fired at by their sentries as spies. The priest was shot, and the lady wounded, though she had still resolution enough to drive on and make her escape. To give an additional spice of romance to the tale, they asserted that the priest was an officer in disguise, and the lady a man in masquerade. If this were so, there is no truth in outward signs, for she certainly talked small, had no traces of beard under her muffler, and must have been a very manikin in coat and breeches. Onwards we marched after this *rencontre*, without seeing anything more formidable than a group of old ladies in red petticoats, and with red kerchiefs over their heads, whom a long-sighted amateur pronounced to be Russians with helmets, until to his great discomfiture they came near, and manifested themselves to be of the unwarlike sex. It was now evident that the enemy were not strong enough to

dispute the ground, and had withdrawn within their forts.

Our next halt was within a shady wood, with one of the large lagunes, so numerous here, in front of us. The wild ducks were flying round it, and their young ones were flapping about on the sedgy shore; the cows were browsing in the meadows, and the peasants sat on their own doorsteps, making bargains and dispensing such comforts as they had at command. In the background were masses of our men, rude and burly, sleeping under the beetling rocks, or boiling their kettles from the boughs of trees; their arms were piled around them, and the field-pieces were ranged in the road. In one picture, what a contrast of the elements of peace and war!

The only symptom of apprehension which the people had showed throughout was that a child's face or figure had never been seen anywhere. They were evidently dearer than pigs or kine, and must have been stowed away for the day in closets and meal-chests. One old forager, by-the-by, searching for water, discovered two children laid in the ditch of an orchard, and covered with boughs—regular babes in the wood. Another short march, and we reached an open space whence the church and windmill of Nora-Finby were visible, and bodies of the allies could be seen moving about in the plain below. In front was the barrier ridge, over the lower edge of which towered Fort Tsee, with its roofs and walls glaring

red and lurid in the light of the setting sun. Here, then, was our position. A green plateau, girded with pine-trees, and sheltered by a low rocky ridge which ran laterally to its left, was the spot chosen for our camp. A quiet little sequestered place, it soon became a scene of bustle and movement, alive with groups and figures of men, climbing trees, lopping boughs, making fires, cooking, smoking, building huts, chatting, skylarking. It seemed a sort of enchantment, so soon was the scene changed, the grassy field covered with bower-like huts, irregular, fantastic, and picturesque, and made motive with striking tableaux. The distant sound of the French bands mingled pleasantly also with the clang of axes, the hum of voices, and snatches of song. As the light faded, the picture melted into twilight hues. The fierce, fitful blaze of the pines showed only the few dusky figures which were still sitting or standing by the watch-fires, or the shadowy forms of the sentries looming in such gigantic outline on the ridge. The sounds, too, had died away, save the crackling of the fires, as fresh branches were thrown on them, or the occasional note of a French bugle; and he only who has lain down under such circumstances knows how solemn is the hush and silence caused by the sleep of men ready to do or die. Scarce had the morn broke ere our allies were afoot. They had taken the initiative, and were pushing forward a regiment in skirmishing order across a plantation towards the broken

ground near Fort Tsee ; and it was really a splendid sight to see the masterly style in which, with seeming hardihood, yet real precaution, they made their advances — facing the fire, yet exposing themselves little to it—dashing at all the dangerous points, and aptly availing themselves of all shelter. There was one defect—the glazed tops of their shakos blazed like pewter platters in the sun, and betrayed the position of every file. The fort kept up a brisk but vain fire on them, and they soon gained the rugged ground near it, without loss, where, sheltered by a naturally scarped rock, the engineers were able in security to trace out their intended battery. There let us leave them a while, and take a look around us.

A single glance at the position. It was almost parallel with the barrier ridge. The French camp was pitched to the right, and southward of the fortresses, in a somewhat marshy plain. Betwixt it and Fort Tsee was the broken ground before spoken of, and a wooded slope, with a nest of pretty houses, the residences of the officials, standing thereon. The Castelholm road passed by it, and the headquarters were established at Finby. Our camp was well chosen. It was directly in rear of the ridge; so directly, that it could not be seen from the round towers, which were built rather on its inner slope. In consequence of this, the guns required so great elevation that the fire was ever random and uncertain.

Though the shot fell around and over us, they seldom took effect. The French marines were on our left, keeping up the communication with the sea. It was arranged that the French battery should be established south-west of the Tsee fort, ours on the ridge betwixt it and Nortike, so that the guns once up, it might be turned without much difficulty against either. So much for the military plan. And now, as our guns cannot be brought up for two days, and there can be no work for us till then, let us gather a few pictures which present themselves. Many are the subjects. The pastoral scenery of the country, smiling in its simple prettiness, and seeming, even amid war, the seat of peacefulness; the people so calm and undisturbed, so rustic in appearance and character, following their usual occupations, apparently fearing nothing, hoping nothing; the camps, with their warlike aspects, their moving masses, their striking action and strange picturesqueness; the fortresses gloomy, stern, and defiant, showing no symptom of life or habitation, save when a flash came from the embrasures. All these suggest pictures and thoughts enow. Let us turn to our camp and the life thereof. Here, sitting in the sunshine, with its little world spread out before us, it is no bad time or place to study the philosophy of a soldier's life, to watch the traits of robustness, childishness, docility, waywardness, fun, earnestness, and constancy, which weave their different shades in the character of the English

soldier. It is holiday time with him now; there is no work to be done to-day, and he is determined to eat, drink, smoke, and be merry, as well as he can. The present is all to him. He puts off and on his cares as he does his knapsack, nor feels the pressure until the straps are cutting into his flesh. He is in the land of Goshen now, amid the flesh-pots. The supplies are abundant. The parties sent for water return ever and anon with a purchase, and are greeted with a cheer. His larder exhibits a miscellaneous collection. Here there is a calf or pig hanging by the legs from a tree; here a black lamb, goat, or goose, tethered near the tents. There are pots and pans everywhere, holding the oddest things, cooked in the oddest way. Everywhere there was the smell of tobacco. In front of the camp is a potato-field, which has been a perfect Naboth's vineyard to him, when a damsel arrives who professes to be proprietress, and offers to sell; straightway the field is covered as by a flight of locusts. All are busy digging, when whizz comes a round of canister in the midst, scattering the gatherers, and making them look rather ruefully on the "spuds" which have been won at such risk.

The free camp life—the comradeship of men sharing toil and danger, sharing quarters, and having their goods in common—the excitement of peril, adventure, and constant action,—all these draw out his best qualities. He is cheerful, obedient, and patient

now, high-hearted and light-spirited, ready for work or fight. Careless and playful, he takes no thought for the morrow. The whizz of a shot passing near may cast a shade of seriousness over a group, but if it leave no sad memory of mangled limbs or green graves, the joke and pipe are soon alight again. He who would know the English soldier must see him, not in garrison or parade, or quarters, but in the presence of his real work; and he who would rule him must study him well. And how with the leaders and the chiefs of hundreds and fifties — is it not good for them too, this free camp life? Do not rough living, rough lying, rough work, beget strong deeds, strong thoughts, strong feelings? Does not this life engender good fellowship, real, honest, earnest intercourse, and repudiate conventionalities and etiquettes? Does it not bring out the true and expose the sham? Is there not a charm in a life where one thinks, feels, and eats naturally? Yes; this life has a charm for all—all whom it boots to consider: a charm for the imaginative man, in its vagueness, its strangeness, its novelty, and picturesqueness; a charm for the vagabond spirit, in its restlessness, change, and uncertainty; for the enterprising, in its adventure and action; for the philosophising one, in the study of the development of different natures under danger and difficulty.

There was a certain pleasantness, too, in the irregular conditions of eating, drinking, and sleeping. A

meal was snatched when and how it could; a nap after the same fashion. Those meals were certainly delicious things. An old battered table, propped up by uneven stones in front of the tent, represented the festive board. On it would be strewn at odd times a wonderful miscellany of tin pannikins, tin spoons, battered knives, odd cups, odd pieces of cold meat, and hunches of bread. There was one box reserved as a seat for a chance guest; it was the seat of honour, but also the seat of inconvenience, as our factotum was sure to forget pepper, salt, sugar, or mustard, and be obliged to rummage for it therein. The rest squatted anywhere around, on stones or folded cloaks. Stray guests would be dropping in ever and anon, but their coming caused no dismay to host or cook. There were always a spoon, a platter, and a welcome to a dive into the crock. Near was the kitchen—a pile of stones with a fire in the midst, and a kettle or crock suspended over it. When the stew was ready, the crock was handed round, and every man made a dive, and tried his hand at pot-luck. After an experiment or two, the Meg Merrilees cookery was universally acknowledged to be the only one adapted to a vagabond life, and the satisfaction of vagabond appetites, and after that everything or anything was put into the caldron. Then came brandy-and-water, in tea-cups or pannikins, and cigars; then the siesta. Pleasant, too, were those snatches of sleep, lying under the fresh green boughs, with the soft light

falling through, the gentle air playing mid the branches, and a soft buzz coming from without; all these bringing light dreams, light slumbers, and light fancies. At times, certainly, there came the boom and crash of a round-shot, rather too close to be favourable to light sleep.

The pictures of our camp life had none of the shadows which fell so darkly on our brethren in the Crimea. Indeed, ours was a holiday campaign in comparison with theirs. The three days after our landing were passed in comparative inaction. On the fourth the transport of guns and ammunition had advanced so much as to admit of some movement. Sand-bags were to be filled, the site of our battery was to be found, and a road marked out for the conveyance of guns up the steep rugged slope. To cover the engineers in these operations, a hundred men were posted on the ridge. Screened by the rocks and trees, the enemy had no cognisance of their presence, and we were thus enabled quietly to pursue the work, and, sitting in the sunshine on the height, survey the varied scenes of operations spread out before us. There were the harbour calm and bright, with light steamers crossing and recrossing it, and the large ships at anchor ever and anon trying a shot or shell at long range—the spot where the French sappers were seen, busy as emmets, digging at the approaches—a little sheltered hollow at foot of the ridge, whence our men were issuing with sand-

bags on their shoulders, like mules in a string—the broad-belted flat occupied by the French outposts, and the road whereon our supplies and munition were continually passing in long trains of carts drawn by sailors. Ever and anon there would be an incident. A shot would be fired from the fort, and the instant it fell, four or five red-breeched soldiers would run after it, pick it up, then toss and tumble it back towards the enemy with every kind of derisive gesture and action. One pitched near our waggons. Jack, in imitation of the French, rushed after it, when we saw him suddenly drop it, put his hands in his pockets, and turn away with a disconcerted gait. The shot was red-hot, and he had burnt his fingers. Our quiet survey was not to be of long duration. On our left was a company of French marines. Their captain was the most uneasy and restless of men. He had a bugle, too, which was never silent for an instant. Some one incautiously showed him a point whence he could see Fort Tsee. From that moment his peace of mind was gone; he knew no rest: he was ever stepping forward on tiptoe to peep, then he beckoned his subalterns to have a look, then one file; then another and another of his men crept up, until the whole were scattered amid the trees, when whizz came a rifle bullet, then a shot plumped over us; then a shell burst just below, and for the next hour every kind of missile came crashing around us. The captain was quiet, and his bugle silent now.

'Twas night, and again we were on the hills this time, guarding the working parties on the French left from the chances of a sortie. The houses on the slope had been set on fire, and were burning fiercely. The flames sped with a rushing sound, bursting out in fiery gusts, and sweeping with a windy fury through the walls and amid the trees. Ever and anon there would be a crash of falling rafters, and then an eruption of sparks and fiery wood, and columns of dark smoke would rise against the clear sky. The red blaze and the crackling flames gave a spectral character to the scene below. There groups of sappers were busy at work under the dark masses of rocks, the movement of their figures and the action of their limbs as they plied pickaxe and spade, tossed up the earth and piled sand-bags, showing with wild supernatural effect in the fitful glare. It seemed like an illustration of Hartz Mountain stories, or the tales of fire-demons. More in the shadow were the dark forms and the piled arms of the chasseurs.

Meanwhile all was still in the forts. Suddenly, about midnight, a single musket-shot was fired from Fort Tsee. It struck an officer of chasseurs. In an instant the whole body sprang with a loud yell into the wood, rushed madly towards the fort, fired a volley at the walls, and then retired again within their intrenchments. 'Twas a wonderful escapade—to us, a strange ebullition of impulsive wrath and vengeance. There was scarcely a pause after this

ere all the forts poured down a tremendous storm of shot, shell, and grape over the whole face of the hill. Flash followed flash, boom succeeded boom; round-shot tore and crashed the trees and rocks around us; shell burst in the thickets, and grape and canister threw their shower of balls through every opening and crevice. For two hours this continued without intermission; there was scarcely time to recover breath after the passing of one shot ere another came.

The French works had, however, been progressing rapidly and uninterruptedly in the meantime. The batteries were ready for the guns; and to cover the placing them in position, as soon as there was light enough a brisk fire of rifles was commenced at 700 yards from behind the breastwork. This was a novelty in war. The experiment has been largely tried, and proven since; but it was new here—this attack of a fortress by rifles. Ensconced behind their sand-bag shelter, the chasseurs took deliberate and deadly aim. Not a face or arm could appear at the embrasures but half-a-dozen bullets were rattling about and around it. The chasseurs seemed to think this work fine sport, and kept popping away in great excitement, exulting greatly when a cry was heard from the fort. This they declared was the *mot de mort* of a Russian soldier. The enemy retaliated from wall-piece and rifle with little effect. The casemates offered such a certain

mark, and the fire was so true and well sustained, that the guns on one face of the fort were actually silenced by it for some hours. This experiment had great interest for us. We had expected great things from the rifle, but hardly anticipated such a result as this. The weapon used on this occasion was not the Minié, but the carbine *à Tige*. Thanks to this diversion, the work was completed during the day and night, and the batteries were ready to open fire with four 16-pounders and four mortars. At daybreak on the 13th the first shot was fired. We heard it with exultation. It was our gage of battle, and the signal of closer onset. Now would come the tug of war if there were any. The progress was at first too slow for our anticipation. The guns were of light calibre, and being brass, could not be fired quickly. The mortars did some damage to the roof, and the rifles still worked mischief, but the round-shot made comparatively little impression. Many a visit of inquiry was made. Many times the question was asked, "Is the breach made?" But this result seemed still far off—so far, indeed, that the General requested Brigadier Jones to turn the flank of the battery which he was erecting against Fort Tsee to co-operate in its reduction. So stood the probabilities, when at four o'clock there was a cry that the white flag was hung out from the tower. Men stared and rubbed their eyes to make sure of a fact which seemed so improbable; but there, sure

enough, was the white flag. A crowd of the curious at once rushed to the spot. The French were in great excitement, gesticulating, dancing, and alternately patting us and their muskets. A blank succeeded the triumph, as the *cortège* of chiefs came back announcing that the terms of capitulation were not agreed upon. In an instant the French resumed their soldier-like attitude. One sound of the bugle, and with that wonderful celerity of theirs, each man was in his place. The fire was resumed, but feebly and dully. There was no heartiness in it, and it was evident that the garrison, dispirited and disheartened, were on the eve of surrender. The question was solved for them. In the morning of the 14th two French officers, Lieutenants Gigot and Gibon, whose hearts were more heroic than their names, illustrated the campaign by a deed of daring. "Followed by a determined band of men," they dashed into the fort through the lower embrasures. In the suddenness of the attack the commandant was killed by a bayonet-thrust; the remnant of the garrison, thirty-two men, were made prisoners. The rest had escaped to the large work. Thus was the first fort won. No breach had been made, no gun disabled, the walls but partially injured. The bullets, however, had told with murderous effect, and conquered the garrison whilst their fortress was still tenable. The fort, in fact, fell to the rifles. This was a good trial of a new power.

Those only who have witnessed an operation of war can imagine how surely and speedily the work of destruction follows, and how, without actual violence or plunder, the careless hand and reckless foot can cause as much disorder and ruin as the ravages of the spoiler. This fort, two hours after it was taken, exhibited an extraordinary scene of destruction and confusion, though it had not been given up to plunder. Knapsacks, broken arms, loaves of hard, black bread, lay strewn about the floors; apartments had been burst open, their contents broken or scattered; and in passing through the galleries, we had to climb over heaps of broken furniture, rubbish, and lumber. Even the dispensary, with its gallipots, splints, and phials, had not escaped the ruthless hand of some worker of disorder. All this was the work of the thoughtless and curious. It must be confessed that our allies had little or no part in it.

It was a melancholy place now, marked everywhere by desolation, and pervaded by that peculiar odour, *è Russe*—that compound smell of damp leather and rank oil which prevails wherever a Russian dwells or moves.

All kinds of marvellous stories were afloat afterwards, of things seen and found in the fort. Among others was a tale that fifty bodies were found headed up in casks of lime-water, finely potted and pickled. It is strange that the human mind is never content

with the actualities of war, but must ever add to them some exaggeration of horror or disgust.

During the previous night the sky was alive with flashes, and the thundering of guns was incessant. The great fort was cannonading a mud-battery on the beach, in which a 10-inch gun had been planted; the ships were responding at a distance. Amid the roar we were puzzled by the loud rattle of musketry —three or four volleys in succession. What this meant remained a mystery until the morning. It then came out that a company of chasseurs had been sent to patrol the tower in order to prevent any outgoing or incoming; on their return they came suddenly on another company of a line regiment placed as an outlying picket—were fired upon by them, and returned the fire. Some loss was occasioned ere the mistake was discovered. The particulars were not easily known, as our allies make little bruit of misadventures.

The remainder of this day was spent in preparation, and was full of smaller events and incidents. The French mortar-battery was to be moved forward towards the main works; the ground was to be marked out for a breaching battery at a distance of 350 yards; our guns were to be drawn up the ridge to the battery, which was now to be turned against Nortike. There are feats of war which, being marked by no startling traits of heroism, no tale of slaughter, are little known or noted, and which are strikingly

illustrative, notwithstanding, of the martial virtues, vigour, promptitude, skill, and endurance. Such a feat was this dragging of the guns up the hill. A party of seamen, landed to drag and work the guns, was commanded by Captain Ramsay. Under him Commander Preedy had charge of the battering guns, Lieutenant Burgess of the field-pieces—the whole, of course, being under the immediate command and direction of Brigadier Jones. Our 32-pounders, which, after many delays and interruptions, were ready at last, had now to be transported from the camp, over some roughish ground first, to the foot of the hill. There the difficulty began. The distance was only about 500 yards, yet the ridge was so steep and rugged, so broken by slippery rocks, pits, roots of trees, and clumps of pines, that the ascent was not easy, even to foot-soldiers. A road had been marked out by the engineers over the least difficult parts, the larger fissures filled up by fascines, and everything done which art could do to make it passable; still it remained a sight to daunt men who were to pull 45 cwt. of wood and iron thereon. But British sailors have a genius for getting anything up anywhere. Their habits give them an intuitive knowledge of the appliances of muscular power. They must do it, however, in their own old wild way, with a wild rush and a wild hurrah: keep them at the disciplined step or the steady pull, and they are lost. They went at their work now with a will, encouraged

and directed by Commander Preedy, a man of great energy and great practical skill. Sometimes they would progress slowly, step by step, foot by foot, then with a wild dash would burst over a short space, then stick so fast that it was only by straining every muscle and taxing every limb—only by the wild impulse, and with the wild cheer—the difficulty was overcome. Thus they went on and on, spite of check or obstacle, patient and enduring with all their wildness, until the end was accomplished, and the guns were in place. 'Twas a strong rough fact, this getting up of the guns.

The afternoon had its incident. We heard a heavy rumbling noise—felt the ground shake—saw a mass of dust rise into the air, and rushed forth to see a ruin yawning with many a wide fissure, shattered and bent from its foundations, in place of the grim regularity and stately perpendicular of Fort Tsee. Since its surrender, the enemy had continued to fire into it, and either one of their shell, or a slow match left burning, had reached the magazine, and so blown up the fort.

Eagerly on the morning of the 15th did we wait for some sign from the hill, where our battery, of three 32-pounders and four howitzers, was ready, at a range of 750 yards, to commence a single-handed contest with Fort Nortike. At length a deep boom, followed by a heavy crash, told us that the work was begun. There was a strength and a power in this

heavy sound of the gun, which gave promise of speedy destruction. Every message from the hill brought tidings of success; every shot was telling; the third which was fired had entered an embrasure; the stones were falling and crumbling from the walls already. There was no doubt of a breach now. The fort replied by a smarter and more earnest fire than we had yet experienced; but from the greater elevation of the battery, the shot fell chiefly over it, and came plumping into our camp. It was now evident that, had the enemy been more active in trying to ascertain our position, it might have been made a very uncomfortable one. One shot had told with fatal effect in the battery. Striking the trunnion of one of the guns, it glanced off and wounded Wrottesley, a lieutenant of Engineers. Death was marked on his face as he was borne through the camp. He lived only to be carried to the sea-beach. Young, fresh, and full of life, his career had scarce begun ere it was ended. He was the second victim war had claimed within a short time from the same family.

Every hour the fire of the fort slackened—every hour the breach gaped wider. Every moment the signal for assault was expected. Our men awaited it sheltered under the lateral ridge, ready and eager. At four o'clock the seamen were relieved at the guns by marine artillerymen, and soon afterwards the breach became practicable. Ere an assault could be planned, the white flag was hoisted again, and the fort was

ours. Nortike had fallen to the great guns, as Tsee had to the rifles; it had cost fewer men, but suffered greater damage. It was night ere our troops marched down to take possession. A wild scene was that night-march—the men scrambling down the rocks and through the trees—the fort standing dark, gloomy, and silent on its rocky ledge, with the calm waters on either side—then the surrender, the mustering of prisoners, the hurrying to and fro, the confusion of figures and voices. After the surrender, the prisoners were marched out and the fort abandoned, as it and its approaches were commanded. A forlorn and melancholy group stood the 120 prisoners in our camp, in the grey of the morning; the long grey greatcoats giving additional sombreness to their grave expressionless physiognomies. They seemed apathetic and indifferent, evidencing some little emotion only when told that their families would be allowed to accompany them. The few Finns among them showed, in manner and aspect, like beings of a superior race.

The outworks had fallen, and our strength was to be concentrated on the citadel. From the battery on the ridge a clear survey could be obtained of the scenes of the past and future attack. There were Tsee and Nortike, on either side, in ruins; in front was Presto, engaged in an encounter—apparently a very equal one—with the Leopard, Hecla, and a French steamer; and there were the ships in their old places. Every day, especially since the fall of

Fort Tsee, the story had been, "the block-ships are coming in," and the cry was still "they come"; but there they remained at their old anchorage, pleasantly and leisurely making a target of the fort at a range of 3000 yards. Creeping on to Telegraph Hill, a high mound in advance of the ridge, and mingling with the French riflemen, we look down on the citadel. Its walls were dotted with marks of shot, and some stones had been loosened from the embrasures by the fire of the ships and the 10-inch gun, the performances of which were afterwards so loudly trumpeted. The French mortars, too, had inflicted much injury; but the fort was still strong and intact enough to offer a long and obstinate defence. Within, however, were drooping hearts and unwilling spirits—within were men who cared not to prolong an unavailing defence for the sake of making it heroic; so once more, and for the last time, the white flag was hoisted. The ships had missed their opportunity, and the programme was thus shorn of its catastrophe.

Now came the closing scene. Ranged beneath the walls of the citadel stood the soldiers of France and England, face to face—face to face in amity for the first time during long, long years. Thus they stood to receive as prisoners a common foe, conquered by their united arms. Curiously did they gaze at each other, and strange was the contrast betwixt the strong, burly men, with their calm impassive faces,

on the one side, and the small wiry forms and sharp visages, electrical, as it were, with excitability, on the other. Near the gate of the fort were Baraguay d'Hilliers, with a brilliant staff, the admirals, and Brigadier Jones. Trooping forth came the prisoners —a pitiful spectacle—so pitiful as to check almost any feeling of generous respect for a conquered foe. Trooping forth they came: the greater number, drunken and disorderly, danced, capered, shouted, sung, and exhibited frantic gestures and contortions, which would have been ludicrous, had not drunken frenzy given a fiendish look to their broad, heavy-browed, Tartar faces. Some passed by, sullen, indifferent, and apathetic; others openly rejoiced in captivity—none showed the dejection and mortification of defeat. One man alone bore himself worthily. He was a Pole, and wore a cross of honour on his breast. Seeming to disdain companionship with the rest, he strode on alone, with martial step and air, as though he wished to show us there was at least one soldier in the garrison. It was an ignoble spectacle—so ignoble as to crush any feeling of triumph, such as men might feel from a victory over "foemen worthy of their steel."

It was a great relief when the thing was over—when the last man had passed onwards to the boats; a great relief to renew one's ideas of soldiership, by turning to the bronzed face and flowing beard of a *vieille moustache* in the ranks opposite.

Presto surrendered at once, and all the forts, finished and unfinished, were afterwards undermined and blown up.

Our work was now over, the campaign was ended. It had been illustrated by no brilliant adventure, startling incident, or hard privation, still less by blood and slaughter; but it was marked by few mishaps or errors, if any, and was complete in its results, military and political. A chain of formidable fortresses had been first cut off from outward succour, and then utterly destroyed; every man within them had been killed or captured, all the guns and stores had become our spoil.

Politically, too, the event had its significance. A gigantic plan of aggression had been balked; the erection of a second Sebastopol in the Baltic had been frustrated; and the Northern Powers saw themselves freed for many years, perhaps for ever, from the presence of a stronghold, mighty for offence and defence.

THE LAYING OF THE ATLANTIC CABLE.

BY THE LATE HENRY O'NEIL, A.R.A.

[*MAGA.* October 1865.]

IN writing this simple narrative of the voyage of the Great Eastern, it is not my intention to enter unnecessarily into any scientific details, either as regards the vessel itself, the Cable, or the machinery used for paying it out or picking it up, and this for two reasons: Firstly, because these details have already been placed fully before the public in other forms; and secondly, were I to do so, I feel that the blunders I should make would probably be so numerous that my statements would be comparatively worthless.

The narrative of any event, and especially of this expedition, naturally takes its tone from the temper of the writer, and its character will be mainly influenced by his profession and pursuits. So there may be the purely historical description—there may be the political, the philosophical, the scientific, the poetical, dramatic, or the artistic description—and it is in the spirit of the last that I venture to address

my readers. As an artist, I felt deeply grateful to the Directors of the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company for the permission, so courteously accorded me, to join the expedition; for I fondly hoped, and fully believed that, both during the voyage, and more especially at its successful termination at Newfoundland, some incidents would occur which would form the materials for an interesting picture; so that I, too, might have a share, however humble, in transmitting to posterity the success of so noble an undertaking. With the temporary failure of the present expedition this hope has not finally vanished; for I still trust that, through the kindness of the Directors, the chief object I then had in view may at some no distant period be fully attained. In the meantime, I hope that the notes I have collected during the voyage, and which I now lay before the public, may not be wholly devoid of interest, even though they do not at present appear on canvas.

At noon on Saturday, July 15th,[1] 1865, the Great Eastern left her moorings at the Nore, and, guided by the Government steamer Porcupine, proceeded on her voyage amidst the most enthusiastic cheers from the crews and passengers of the various yachts around her. Her course was down a new channel called the "Bullock," which had been sounded and buoyed by the Admiralty. One of the most exciting scenes I

[1] Ship's time is used throughout this paper.

ever witnessed was the heaving-up of the anchor, each link of the chain attached weighing over seventy pounds; and nothing could give a better conception of the size of the vessel than the power required in performing that operation. Round the capstan revolved sixty men, with a like number in each of the two lower decks, whose combined efforts were unavailing at times to stir the anchor, in spite of the animated exhortations of Mr Halpin, the chief officer, and the lively strains of a young fiddler, who, perched on the capstan, played such music as sailors love to hear. At the first sound, however, of the tune, "Slap bang, here we are again!" the men made a determined effort, and all joining in the lively chorus heart and voice, they succeeded in overcoming the resistance offered; but it was not till after many repetitions of the same invigorating air that the anchor was finally brought up.

Our progress was at first so painfully slow that some grave doubts arose as to whether the vessel could ever attain such a speed as six knots an hour. During her course down Bullock Channel, and even as far as Dover, so long as daylight lasted, ever and anon an excursion steamer or sailing-boat came alongside filled with passengers, who, in spite of the languor of sea-sickness, testified their good wishes for our success by cheering with hearty goodwill. At 4.15 P.M. the Porcupine, having hoisted up a white flag at her mizzen bearing the words, "God speed

you," turned slowly round, and, on passing the Great Eastern, gave a ringing cheer, which was answered by deafening shouts on the part of our men, and then alone we proceeded on our eventful voyage.

Descending from the bridge to look about me, my first impression gave me the notion of a decent-sized village. Around me were blacksmiths' forges, carpenters' shops, all resounding with the hum of busy workers. On looking at the live-stock on board, we seemed like a large community seeking another home, taking everything necessary for a permanent settlement, with the exception of the emigrant's chief blessing — namely, a wife: for I need scarcely say that none of the fair sex accompanied the expedition. We numbered nearly five hundred men in all, to supply whose wants there were twelve oxen, one cow, one hundred and twenty sheep, twenty fine Hampshire pigs, and innumerable geese, ducks, and fowls, and all these independently of hundredweights of fresh and preserved meats. Nor must I forget to include a black cat and a jackdaw, who often during the voyage would perch for hours on the top of the dynamometer watching the paying-out of the Cable, apparently, with self-satisfied complacency.

Some idea of the size of the vessel may be obtained by stating that the length of the walk on deck, which we named Regent Street, was exactly one-eighth of a mile; and here daily would the energetic Mr Cyrus Field take his exercise before breakfast and dinner,

taking such hasty strides that no one on board could keep up with him.—Or look at the steerage. Below the deck aft is a spacious room, in which four large wheels are placed in a line from stem to stern, at each of which are two men: though there are two compasses before the foremost wheel, the men steer entirely by the brass finger of a dial, whose motions are guided by the chief steersman, who stands at the wheel in the centre of the ship, which, notwithstanding all prognostications to the contrary, answers readily to the helm, though going at a speed of only four knots per hour.

A boatswain on board who, with ten men, had charge of the vessel during the winter, describing her size and solitude, said to me, "Sir, a man might have lain dead in some cabin astern for a whole week before we at the bow would know of it." And I can easily believe it. I have explored the vessel as much as most men on board; I have wandered through long dark passages, at moments illumined by the fierce and sudden blaze of an open furnace—nay, I have descended to the very kelson—and yet I know that there are many places from which I should find it difficult to emerge again into light. In my survey I noticed particularly that the names of many streets, alleys, and taverns in the neighbourhood of the docks were painted on various parts of the lower decks, showing how a sailor loves to bear with him a memory of his favourite and familiar localities.

The speed of the vessel increased gradually during her course down the Channel from four to five, and ultimately to six knots per hour, which latter rate she steadily maintained throughout the run to Valentia, even with the extra weight she had to tug through the waters during the latter half of the voyage. At 5.30 A.M. on Sunday we were off Beachy Head, and at 11 Captain Anderson read prayers in the dining saloon, which was by no means crowded, though more than two hundred men attended service. Early on Monday morning Plymouth was reached, and we made the Lizard Point at noon, and there we noticed ahead of us a screw-steamer labouring violently, and evidently determined to overhaul us. She proved to be the Caroline, which left the Thames several days before us, bound for Valentia, and having the shore-end of the Cable on board. We had fully expected to find her at her destination, but she was so heavily weighted that the slightest breeze was too much for her; so, running for shelter into Falmouth, she there awaited our coming up. A strong new line being sent astern, we immediately took the helpless vessel in tow, and had every reason to congratulate ourselves that we were not on board of her. Her fearful rolling and pitching, however annoying to her inmates, were to us, sitting on the paddle-boxes of our motionless ark, highly interesting, exciting, and even amusing. It was like viewing a looming shipwreck from the comfortable boxes of a theatre, with the additional advan-

tage of knowing that the scene, with all its accessories, was sternly real. Throughout the night the wind blew hard, but she held on bravely, her crew, whatever apprehension her wretched state gave rise to, knowing well that, without our assistance, there would be probably such a delay as might prove fatal to the undertaking. Nothing occurred until we had passed the Skilligs, two islands about eight miles distant from Valentia, when the rope gave way just over the bow of the Caroline, and she parted from us; but with a fair wind, and being so near her destination, we had no further fears for her safety. At the same time, about 5 A.M. on Wednesday the 19th of July, we came up with the Terrible and the Sphinx, the two war-steamers appointed to convoy the Great Eastern across the Atlantic.

As the laying of the shore-end of the Cable would necessarily occupy some days, Captain Anderson thought it prudent to seek safer quarters than the immediate neighbourhood afforded; so, sending Mr Canning, the chief engineer, on shore to superintend the laying of the shore-end, we turned south and steered for Bantry Bay, where we anchored at 4 P.M. towards the east end of Bear Haven, there to await further orders. Immediately on our arrival we were invaded by a fleet of boats containing the whole commercial population of Bear Island and the adjacent mainland. From the rough appearance of the natives, and the rude simplicity of their naval

architecture, we might easily imagine ourselves in the neighbourhood of some country not often visited by civilised nations. Like ants climbing up the heaven-sent carcass of a huge elephant, so does this human swarm clamber up the gangway with frantic yells and shouts; and utterly regardless of the danger of falling into the sea, they push each other wildly in their eager endeavours to be the first on board. The deck once gained, they establish a position in the fairest portion of the ship, from which it were vain to try and remove them; and there displaying their wares, they open a profitable intercourse (at least on one side) with our silly crew. We all know how lavishly a sailor spends his money, on useful things if possible, but if such be not obtainable, then on anything. Here have we been scarcely five days at sea, and yet, judging from the eagerness with which our men part with their money, one would imagine that they had just arrived after a six months' cruise at least. And what things they purchase! One man carries off in triumph a goose, which, when plucked, would hardly suffice for the dinner of even a moderate eater, and yet he liberally invites two or three of his comrades to share his Sunday's repast, when he hopes to enjoy his cherished delicacy, stuffed, as he promises them, with heaps of onions. Another purchases a pair of woollen stockings, which seem better adapted for grating nutmegs than for comfort. Hundredweights of bad butter and rocky cheese — gallons of odious

stuff called buttermilk—salt fish of three years' pickle —scores of eggs—mountains of bread, of which they can get what they like on board—clumsy pipes—poultry, dead and alive—lines to catch cod-fish in Newfoundland (the latter bought also by the gentlemen)—everything is purchased, and at prices, too, far exceeding those usual in our not over-cheap metropolis. As to the mere sightseers and idlers on deck, whatever impression the vast ship made on them it would be difficult to guess, their admiration being exclusively bestowed on our black pigs. I particularly observed one gentleman, dressed in remnants of varied hue and material, whose contemplation of those animals produced a mixed feeling of delight and regret. Daily he came on board, never moving from the spot they occupied (the painter's shop), inhaling the cherished odour, and ever making earnest but fruitless attempts to obtain one from the purser, in exchange for a huge white pig he left in his boat below. Nor must I forget the noble patriotism of one visitor, evidently a merchant of great standing in the country, who inquired if the ship wanted coaling, offering, in that case, to place fifty tons at our disposal. And most amusing was his expression of astonishment and unbelief when he was informed that the quantity he offered would scarcely suffice for five hours' consumption. When the market flagged, either through the absorption of the supply or the weakness of the demand, our sailors invited the natives to a terpsi-

chorean contest; so the fiddler was brought on deck, and after much coyness on the part of the performers, several highly characteristic, but, in my opinion, very monotonous and ungraceful figures were executed on both sides. At sunset, after repeated orders, and with much trouble, our noisy visitors left the ship, their departure being attended with the same frightful yells and shouts that had graced their arrival.

On Thursday morning, the weather being fine, Captain Anderson proposed making the ascent of Hungry Hill, a mountain adjacent, whose summit reaches to the respectable height of 2050 feet: it being his custom, wherever he anchored, to select the highest spot of land in the neighbourhood, and to ascend it, in order to learn the nature of the country around. Several of us joined him in this by no means formidable-looking excursion, though, before we were half-way up, many of us regretted that we had not remained with those keen sportsmen below, who spent the day in vainly seeking some feathered, or indeed any object on which to exercise their skill. After a tedious ascent, we at last reached the summit, but, as is usually the case, only to find ourselves enveloped in a dense fog. Before we descended, however, it cleared off for a few moments, enabling us to get a hasty glimpse of the scenery around, whilst far in the distance we descried the Terrible and the Sphinx entering the haven by the narrow channel at the west end. This latter fact was the

signal for a hurried and over-precipitous descent, from the tumbles met with in which some of us did not recover for many days.

Throughout Thursday and Friday the ship was visited by numbers of the neighbouring gentry, and the market was kept up as usual, though the arrival of the two men-of-war relieved us from a little of the pressure. On Friday evening, Captain Napier of the Terrible, and Captain Hamilton of the Sphinx, with all the officers of both vessels, joined us at dinner. Amongst the latter were two intelligent young Danes, whose talk was naturally about *our* beloved Princess, and the shameful spoliation of *their* country; and certainly it would be difficult to find two themes better calculated to awaken a Briton's loyal enthusiasm or to arouse his fierce indignation.

In spite of the lovely scenery around, we were getting tired of our pleasant inactivity, and were anxious to leave our present moorings. Sorely grieved, too, was Captain Anderson at the delay caused by the late arrival of the Caroline, for well he knew that the time was approaching when the weather could not be depended on for two days together. It was therefore with intense satisfaction that we hailed the arrival of a coast-guardsman from Valentia, who, coming overland, reached our ship on Saturday at 11 P.M., bringing the welcome intelligence that the Caroline had commenced laying the shore-end of the Cable (about twenty-seven miles in

length), and that the operation would be completed early on the following morning; so, getting up steam as quickly as possible, we weighed anchor at 2 A.M. on Sunday, July 23d, and, followed by the Terrible and the Sphinx, proceeded to the spot where the splice was to be effected. At 10.30 we came up with the Caroline, and shortly after the Hawk, a fine steamer belonging to the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, arrived, having on board a distinguished party, including Sir Robert Peel, the Knight of Kerry, Lord John Hay, Captain Hamilton, a director of the Atlantic Telegraph Company, and many other gentlemen connected with the undertaking. There were also some ladies on board, who were sadly disappointed at not being able to visit the ship,—a task which, owing to the roughness of the sea, even the gentlemen could not accomplish without a wetting. Here Mr Canning rejoined us, accompanied by Dr W. H. Russell, Mr Deane, Mr Temple, and others. The paddle-box boats of the Sphinx having taken the end of our Cable on board the Caroline, the splice with the shore-end was successfully effected at 5.30 P.M.; and the last visitor having left our ship, amidst the firing of guns and loud cheers from all the five vessels, we commenced paying out the Cable from the aft tank at a speed of about four knots per hour.

And now, before proceeding further with my narrative, I think it expedient to explain as briefly as

possible the nature of the operations to be performed, and also the means to be employed for carrying them out, in order that I may, if I can, make the subsequent events thoroughly intelligible to the reader.

The Cable, 2300 miles in length, was coiled in three tanks: one at the stern (I take them in the order used), the second in the fore-part, and the third in the middle of the vessel. The first contained about 840 miles of Cable, the second about 640 miles, and the remainder, together with the shore-end for Newfoundland, was coiled in the middle tank. The ends of these separate coils were kept joined, and the transfer from one tank to another was performed with the greatest ease. From the fore-tank a trough, with revolving wheels placed at certain distances to prevent too great friction, extended to the paying-out machinery at the stern, whilst from the other tanks smaller troughs led to the main artery. The paying-out machinery, as I have said, is placed at the stern, and is perhaps the most perfect thing of its kind that has ever been constructed, not a hitch occurring in its working throughout the voyage. It consists of a large wheel, round which the Cable makes two turns, and then, passing out, it glides over a succession of smaller wheels, over which others are placed, acting as breakers to prevent it paying out too quickly. Between the last wheel of this machine and the one immediately over the stern of the vessel the dynamometer is placed. This is an instrument for calculat-

ing the strain to which the Cable is subjected in its progress. Through the upright grooves of an iron frame, a wheel, UNDER which the Cable passes, slides according to the varying strain, the amount being indicated by figures on the side of the frame. When it is necessary to pick up the Cable, a wire rope is passed from the wheel at the bow, and thence outside the vessel to the stern, where it is brought up and fastened securely to the Cable, which is then cut, and the whole dropping into the sea, the rope is hauled in at the bow until the Cable is brought on board and fixed to the picking-up machinery, which is worked by a small steam-engine, and between this machine and the bow-wheel is another dynamometer. Lastly, there are rope-stoppers used to retard the progress of the Cable, or the wire rope when in use; these are made of untwisted hemp rope of great thickness, and are twined two or three times round the cable or rope, and the ends being pulled down by the men, the resistance they give is very effectual. To conclude this explanation—in order to ascertain the perfect continuity of the electric current, signals were continually passed along the whole Cable to Valentia, and *vice versa*, and these tests were made every ten or fifteen minutes throughout the day and night.

And now to resume my narrative. The paying-out of the Cable progressed satisfactorily, the speed increasing to six knots per hour, beyond which rate it was not thought advisable to proceed. Things looked

bright indeed; and as regards the elements, no expedition could have started under more favourable auspices. The cloudless afternoon had given place to a real summer evening, and watching from the paddle-boxes the magnificent sunset (our first in the broad Atlantic) under the soothing influence of our pipes, we banished all fear and anxiety, already speculating with too sanguine confidence as to the time we should reach Newfoundland; and when at last we retired to rest, not one of us dreamed of impending disaster.

At 4.20 A.M. on the following morning I was aroused from sleep by the booming report of one of our guns—that being a preconcerted signal for the men-of-war to stop. I hurried on deck, and to my dismay learned that the signalling was imperfect, indicating that some accident had happened to the Cable. Fresh tests were applied over and over again, but ever with the same mortifying result. The communication with shore, however, not being wholly stopped, though it was impossible to say how soon that might occur, orders were given to send out the Hawk to our assistance. In the meantime the Cable had been cut, and, being transferred to the machinery at the bow, we proceeded to pick it up at the slow rate of one mile per hour. Before this latter operation, however, could be begun, we had paid out twelve miles or more; so that, supposing, as it was conjectured, the faulty portion of the Cable had

passed overboard at the time of the discovery, it would require twelve hours to bring it to light. When six miles of Cable had been drawn up, it was cut, and tested to see if the defect was on board; but such not being the case, we resumed the tedious process of picking up. At 5.30 A.M. on Tuesday the Hawk arrived. By this time ten miles of Cable had been hauled in, and again it was cut and tested, but with the same result as before. Very early it was discovered that the steam-power of the picking-up machinery was defective; and Mr Canning, the chief engineer, attempted to remedy this defect by bringing into service a small locomotive on board. A consultation having then taken place between the chief engineers and electricians, it was thought advisable to return to the spot where the splice with the shore-end had been made; but Mr Canning was anxious to see the result of his additional machinery; so having picked up about two hundred fathoms more of the Cable, to the delight of all the faulty part was brought on board. On examination it was found that a piece of the iron wire, of which the outer covering of the Cable is partly made, had penetrated the gutta-percha, thus destroying the perfect insulation of the copper wires. Some suspicion arose of foul play, such an instance having occurred some years ago in laying a cable in the North Sea, a crime which was only brought to light two years after by the confession of the culprit, who declared that

he had been offered one thousand pounds if he succeeded in his diabolical attempt.

At 1 P.M., the splice being made, we again proceeded on our course, but not for long. Half an hour had scarcely elapsed, when, to the surprise and dismay of all, a fresh fault was announced. This time the disaster looked serious, for all communication with the shore was totally lost. Patiently we watched the application of continual tests, the very mention of picking up producing a feeling of gloom, and the mere sight of the machine becoming hateful. When at last we were about to have resort to it, suddenly the signals were again perfect; and soon after, with much laughter at our fears, we learned that the cause of all our anxiety and despair was the removal of an instrument at Valentia, for some purpose best known to those on shore; and then resuming the satisfactory process of paying out of the Cable, with thankful and merry hearts we again proceeded on our voyage.

At 8 A.M. on Wednesday, July 26th, we desired the Sphinx (the only vessel having the proper apparatus) to take soundings. Having stopped for that purpose, she was unable to overtake us. Gradually she became less distinct, and on Friday morning we lost sight of her for ever; and it was supposed that she passed us in a foggy night whilst we were picking up the second fault. From this time up to Saturday the 29th no fresh announcement of disas-

ter interfered with the proper attention to our meals, or destroyed our equanimity; and I take this seasonable opportunity to say a few words about the company on board.

And first, as in duty bound, let me mention Captain Anderson of the China, one of the Cunard steamers, specially selected on account of his great experience for carrying out this arduous enterprise. Of him I may truly say that I never met with a nobler specimen of a race of men whom, from my earliest youth, I have ever regarded with the utmost respect and admiration—brave, yet God-fearing; stern on duty, yet gentle at other times; and of such skill that it is not surprising his reputation as a commander should be so high. Then follow two gentlemen on whose ability the success of the undertaking mainly depended — namely, Messrs Canning and Clifford, the chief Engineers, whose characters will be best developed in the events that occurred. Next follow Messrs de Sauty and Saunders, the chief Electricians of the expedition. There is Mr Gooch, afterwards M.P. for Cricklade, who, as a director of the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, and also as a director and chief proprietor of the Great Eastern, necessarily leads a most anxious life; and Mr Cyrus Field, the pioneer of Atlantic enterprise, full of hope and confidence, and never betraying anxiety or despair even at the most serious disaster —a man whose restless energy is best shown in his

spare yet strong frame, as if his daily food but served for the development of schemes for the benefit of mankind in general and the profit of individuals in particular, every stoppage in our progress being marked by the issue of a fresh prospectus, each showing an increase of dividend as the certain result of confiding speculation,—and I say all honour to him for his unswerving resolution to complete that great work for the success of which he has toiled so long and so earnestly. Then we have Professor Thomson and Mr Varley, two eminent electricians sent out by the Atlantic Telegraph Company to draw up a report of the voyage, but who have no authority to interfere in the management of the expedition: most learned men are they; so precise, that a difference in their respective calculations of even a millionth part of a decimal involves a long and animated yet perfectly amicable discussion. A valuable man, too, is Captain Moriarty, R.N., whose services cannot be too highly acknowledged, his skill and precision in taking observations being of the greatest benefit. No chance of escape has the coy sun; let him but peer forth an instant, and Moriarty's keen and quick eye snatches the information required. There are also in our saloon Messrs London, Temple, and Willoughby Smith, all connected with the expedition; nor must I forget M. Despecher, a French gentleman who has witnessed the laying of many a marine telegraph cable—a great traveller, and there-

fore more free from prejudice than some of his countrymen. There is Dr Ward and his son, who have plenty of work to do, and so has Mr Deane, ever busy taking notes for a history of the expedition, for which the genial and industrious Mr Dudley is preparing pictorial illustrations; and last, not least, the well-known Dr Russell, who not only supplies the literary portion of the aforesaid work, but who also has to furnish an elaborate report of the voyage for the Company to forward to the press: an excellent companion is he on a long voyage, ever chatty and cheerful, and full of anecdotes and information picked up in every quarter of the globe. It is said that Cæsar, Napoleon, and, I believe, our own Wellington, could write despatches and give verbal orders at the same time; but in this respect Russell beats them all. I have seen him correct the proof-sheets of a newspaper of which he is the editor, enter into the general conversation, and, moreover, play a rubber of whist, all at once, though I fear with some detriment to his partner's interests in the latter operation; his two sons, Willie and Johnny, accompanying him, looking forward with delight to catching a cod-fish in Newfoundland. There are also many young gentlemen in the other saloon who accompany the expedition for the purpose of acquiring experience as engineers or electricians, amongst whom are Mr Gooch's son, Messrs Crampton, jun., and Trench, and a most ingenious little mechanician, M. Schäfer, whose good temper

was proof against all the practical jokes played on him: a most useful member of the community was he, repairing with great skill and readiness any article broken on board, from a watch to a meerschaum pipe. His last mechanical exploit was the fashioning of a small knife from a piece of the iron wire of the cable, the blade of which was only three-tenths of an inch in length, and warranted to cut. My list would not be complete were I to omit Mr Halpin, the chief officer,—a quondam blockade-runner, full of Southern proclivities, and with a hearty dislike of the Stars and Stripes, prolific of marvellous sea-stories, every inch (and many has he) a sailor, and a great favourite with all.

How smoothly does the Great Leviathan glide through the water! So quietly work the ponderous engines, and with so little vibration, that, except for the smoke (of which more anon), you could scarcely believe you were in a steam-vessel. But alas! "*surgit amari aliquid.*" As in a community of workmen, those who do the least work make the most noise, so in this huge factory of machinery there is a small auxiliary engine, very properly called the "Donkey," which makes an incessant noise, with but little intermission, during the whole twenty-four hours. My feelings were too hostile to allow me to make any inquiries as to the nature of the functions performed by my tormentor (something in the pumping line, I believe); but if I might judge by the noise, I should

say that not only had it to propel the vessel, but also to perform all the work done on board by machinery. With great tact, too, this little monster has been so placed that the inmates of the chief saloon shall have the most practical experience of its obtrusive activity, as if to remind them that life even on board the Great Eastern is not wholly a bed of roses—truly a moral doctrine, but very trite and utterly superfluous amidst circumstances that serve to keep it ever fresh in remembrance. Moreover, it is useless to try and escape the annoyance by changing your cabin, for, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, it is by nature ubiquitous, and wherever you wander, there also shall its rap-rap be heard. Yet, in spite of this little nuisance, what life can be compared to a life at sea, especially in such a good ship, where there is little or no chance of ever being prostrated by sea-sickness? No doubt it has its drawbacks; but what existence is free from them? True, you cannot wander in green lanes, nor feast the eye on fresh verdure and the varied hues of "rain-awakened" flowers; but in no state can you be more independent of those petty cares which cloud the sunshine of the mere dwellers on earth. You are free from the extortion of cab-men and the inconsiderate rush of a city's mob. There are no letters to write, no calls to make or receive, and no bills to pay. The tax-gatherer, the poor-rate collector, and all the other blessings of civilised life, are unknown. In all security you walk

abroad, and in the darkest hour of night dismiss all fears of pickpockets and garotters. You keep up no wife for your late return, and the latch-key is laid aside. Last, and chief blessing of all, money, without which you cannot move an inch on shore, is at sea a mere drug, and not of the slightest use or consideration.

Perched aloft in the rigging, I was wholly absorbed in these pleasing reflections, and, with pipe in mouth, was enjoying the scene around me, engaged in no more serious occupation than watching the baffled waves break against the vessel in imbecile attempts to disturb its equilibrium, when I was suddenly aroused from my dream of sweet content by a sound of suppressed laughter from below, whilst, at the same time, I experienced a curious sensation, indicating a want of freedom in my lower limbs. Looking down, I saw a sea of grinning faces beneath, and at my feet stood a good-humoured sailor, holding the ends of a cord, with which he had lashed me to the rigging, who said, "Please your honour, pay your footing!" What could I do? Though, like Don Juan, by nature choleric and sudden, and sorely vexed at his abrupt overthrow of my speculations, I could not but join in the laugh against me, and comply with the request so courteously made. So, graciously dropping a coin in my highwayman's hat, I received from him a certificate in satisfaction of all future demands, and, moreover, entitling the

bearer henceforth to the free and undisturbed use of spar or rigging, and then I was speedily released from my ludicrous and over-conspicuous position; nor do I intend to scratch out a word I have said, for, with this trifling exception, nothing occurred during the voyage to upset my theory of the utter valuelessness of money when at sea.

And now a word or two about our amusements, of which, if I may judge by the alacrity shown in attending the summons of the various bells, those connected with the culinary department are by no means of the least importance. At 8 A.M. we sit down to a substantial breakfast, which would be perfect but for the absence of milk. True, our cow is dead, but as she never yielded a cupful of that beverage, the queer quality of the article supplied must not be laid to the charge of the poor beast. The pipe and cigar follow immediately, and then till luncheon we either pass our time in watching events above or in literary or artistic occupations below—the latter, however, attended with some difficulty. The saloon of a vessel, freighted with nearly five hundred human beings, is ill adapted for serious pursuits, and there are defects in that of the Great Eastern, as arranged for this voyage, which are not apparent in other ships, though I acknowledge that in one point she beats every vessel afloat, and that is her extreme steadiness of motion, even in a stiff breeze. I have heard that great worker, Anthony Trollope, declare that on board of the Cunard

steamers he could write as well and as indefatigably as at home; but I doubt if even he could do so in the saloon of the Great Eastern. Independently of the curiosity and anxiety naturally aroused by the knowledge of what is going on above, there is noise enough below to wake the very dead. The under saloon has been turned into a carpenter's shop and a general receptacle for timber and other ship-stores; and it would seem as if it was the sole duty of some half-a-dozen noisy men (relieved at times by half-a-dozen noisier men) to be continually lowering or lifting huge logs of wood, which bump about, damaging the gilding and tearing the pretty paper, to the evident discomfort and horror of Mr Gooch, and also destroying the repose of those who are either writing or reading, or doing that for which reading is so good a cloak—namely, sleeping. In vain M. Despecher sets himself down to get through the two tasks he was resolved on performing during the voyage. The careful study of 'La Vie de Jules César,' and the 'Traité sur la Telegraphie,' is utterly incompatible with the incessant "Yow, ow, ows" of the men, and the sudden and sharp calls made on his attention by the logs of wood—so, slamming violently the pages of his beloved books, he flies to the piano, and from the lively strains of the "Guards' Waltz" strives to produce a counter-irritation. How Professor Thomson and Mr Varley can fill sheet after sheet with abstruse theorems and problems, illustrated by a whole army of

letters commanded by X, Y, Z, is to me a wonder; and I can only conclude that, their occupations requiring more head than heart, they are not alive to the disturbing elements around them; but before deciding this point I should like to know what Mr Babbage would feel under the circumstances.

A few hours before dinner are occupied in pacing the deck and inhaling the sea-breezes impregnated with smoke, which is extremely pertinacious in its attacks. Carefully avoiding the constant reek of the four funnels (thank necessity, the fifth has made way for a tank), you are met on all sides by the obnoxious vapours of the innumerable galley chimneys, and you get out of the way of these only to encounter the blacksmith's blast or the still fouler breath of the small locomotive. To those who seek exercise combined with amusement, the games of shovel-board and quoits offer every advantage. At times we have music, Dr Ward being an excellent performer on the violin, and M. Despecher a decent one on the piano, though, like most of his countrymen, he has no great love for the classic masters. At 5.30, that glorious "tocsin of the soul, the dinner-bell," calls us down to the absorption of a sumptuous meal enriched by wines of excellent quality. Indeed, in these matters the Directors have shown a most praiseworthy liberality —so much so, that a joker on board, alluding to the title of the Company, said, "As regards 'Construction' I know nothing, but I can safely assert that it

is a most excellent 'Maintenance' Company." No wonder that Dr Ward has so much to do, or that his patient son is worn with fatigue in dispensing medicine in the various cabins. However abstemious we may be on shore, the appetite at sea never seems satisfied. People—I speak also of myself—who when at home found the greatest difficulty in consuming a few inches of dry toast at breakfast, can and do here actually dispose of two or three mutton-chops, a plate of broiled ham and eggs, and a whole rack-ful of toast. Nor does this suffice till dinner, the luncheon-bell being eagerly attended to. Amusing is it to see these delicate creatures daily sipping sherry and bitters at five, as if their poor appetites required any stimulant. As to the dinner, I say nothing. Considering that the bill of fare contains about twenty items, natural curiosity, even without hunger, would be a sufficient reason for not starving. At tea, like children, they enjoy their toast and marmalade, and make no objection to biscuits and cheese at ten; and verily I believe they would not fail to attend were there even an additional meal or two added to the already too frequent repasts of the day. To conclude my lists of amusements—the evening is spent at whist, chess, or other games, and early to bed is the order of the night.

To return to my narrative. On Saturday, July 29th, at 1 P.M., to the sudden discomfiture of our hopes, another fault was announced, and of a far more serious

nature than the first. There was no delay this time. As soon as possible the vessel was stopped, and the Cable cut and transferred to the bow; but again, owing to the want of steam, two miles or more had been paid out before the machine was ready to pick up the submerged portion. It was the unanimous opinion of the electricians that the fault was only two miles distant (it being, in fact, on board when discovered); and exactly that amount of Cable having been hauled in, the defective part was brought to light. Again had a piece of the same wire penetrated the Cable; this time right through, touching the copper wire, and destroying the continuity of the electric current. The affair looked black indeed. At 7 P.M., the splice being made, another mishap occurred in transferring the Cable to the stern. At all times this operation is attended with some danger, owing to the length of the ship and the many obstructions to be avoided; and, if possible, I cannot but think that it would be safer to have the picking-up machinery placed aft, though, no doubt, there would then be danger of the Cable getting entangled with the screw; add to which, the difficulty of steering so large a vessel going astern, which would in that case have to be done whenever the picking-up process was resorted to. This accident being soon repaired, once more we anxiously resumed our course.

Mr Canning, having cut off the piece of Cable which had the broken wire through it, called the men

together, and one by one asked their opinion on the matter. Almost unanimously they declared that the disaster could not have been the result of accident; and such was their indignation, that, supposing their verdict to be correct, the culprit, if discovered, would have met with no mercy at their hands. Still, without ascribing the disasters which had occurred to malice, it was determined by Messrs Canning and Clifford that every possible precaution should be taken; and for this purpose they requested the inmates of the saloon to take their watch by turn in the tank day and night. This was readily acceded to, the men even acquiescing in the arrangement, though with regret. Certainly it was painful to doubt their honesty, especially as so many of them had been for years in Mr Canning's service; but this precaution was as useful to them as to him, for when the peculiar nature of the accidents be considered, taking into account their similarity, together with the conclusion arrived at by the men themselves, with this startling fact, moreover, that *they all occurred during the same watch;* and knowing, as I have said, that such had occurred before, it was difficult to avoid the suspicion of foul play, and that some one man, either through malice or hope of gain, had been the cause of these misfortunes. It must be said, however, that Captain Anderson, after much reflection, cast aside all idea of mischief, believing that accident often produces stranger coincidences

than can be effected by design; and without expressing any opinion on the matter, I shall be sincerely glad if the Directors, after thoroughly sifting this unfortunate business, arrive at a similar conclusion.

At 3.30 A.M., July 31st, the last coil of the Cable in the aft tank being paid out, the vessel's progress was stayed for a few moments, and the shifting to the fore tank was performed with the greatest ease. All went on smoothly until Wednesday, August 2d. During this time I had taken my watch in the tank twice without observing anything in the least degree suspicious; nor was I sorry to have had the opportunity of seeing with what perfect ease and celerity the Cable uncoiled itself and passed upwards. At 7 A.M., Mr Cyrus Field, keenest of watchmen, being in the tank, the last fault occurred, and, strange to say, with the *same gang of men in the tank* as were present at all the previous disasters. We had now run 1062 miles from Valentia, having only 604 miles more to reach Newfoundland, 300 of which were comparatively shallow, where all danger of failure in picking up the Cable would vanish. By this time we had become resigned, and even callous, looking on these misfortunes as only causing a temporary delay.

This being our crowning disaster, and the cause of all our future operations, I wish to describe it with a little more minuteness. At 10.30 A.M., in lat. 51°.25 N., long. 39°.1 W., the Cable having been cut and trans-

ferred to the bow, the picking-up machine was started, and had hauled in about two miles when the boiler of the capstan engine became short of steam, and whilst waiting for a fresh supply the wind suddenly changed. In attempting to get the ship's head to wind she drove over the Cable, causing it to pass under her fore-poop, and foul of the hawse-pipe at the stem on the port-bow. The engines were immediately reversed, and every endeavour was made to get the ship's head round, but without success. As the cable was being chafed, a stopper attached to a manilla rope was put on, and line veered away until the Cable was clear of the hawse-pipes, when it led away round to the star-board. We were hauling in a few revolutions in order to get the chafed parts on board as quickly as possible, when, at twenty-five feet from the bow, with a sharp snap the CABLE BROKE, and, rushing through the stoppers to which the men held on bravely, was sucked into the sea and lost — perhaps for ever.

All the power of language is weak, indeed, to convey the effect produced by this disaster. The shock was so sudden and unexpected that we could not immediately realise our position. For an instant it paralysed us; we looked at each other, but spoke not: yet from out the very silence that fell on us there breathed a mute questioning, as if the tale needed repetition to ensure belief—for the announcement was made in a low whisper, as if the calamity were too

great to be uttered aloud, and in the hope that some partial relief might be obtained by not spreading the report too quickly. Then for a while it changed the nature of all, in respect of moody peevishness, reducing us to a uniform level. Our very occupations seemed hateful; the piano was shut; the mere mention of whist was met by a reproving shake of the head; and the editor of a newspaper, published weekly on board, refused to issue the looked-for journal, as if to say: "Whilst there is so much going on to excite your hopes and fears, what need have you of amusement? nor are you in a proper temper to receive it, even if offered." For a moment Captain Anderson lost his ever-hopeful smile, and Messrs Canning and Clifford slightly forgot their usual courtesy. Mr Gooch went below, vainly attempting, through sleep, to obtain oblivion, and Mr Field locked himself in his cabin, to draw up a fresh prospectus. Mr Halpin uttered more than his usual allowance of oaths; whilst Mr. de Sauty, his occupation gone, fetched his largest pipe, and, standing with his back against the doors of his electric office, with hands plunged deeply into his pockets, smoked fiercely, as if to conceal his anxiety behind the densest cloud. Even the two young Russells lost their usual spirits—and no wonder, for failure, to them, meant a speedy return to school and all its restraints in lieu of the promised holiday in the States; whilst Master Johnny was guilty of strange neglect, for the pet

sheep "Billy"—for whose sake he daily committed petty larceny—on that day bah-ah-ah'd unheeded. Moreover, a certain demoralisation had taken place. Hitherto I had never seen any one light a pipe or cigar in the saloons, and now smoking was prevalent, the ladies' chamber, with its pretty ornaments and luxurious couches, being specially selected as a divan; and this dreadful breach of discipline was regarded with utter indifference by Captain Anderson and Mr Gooch, the latter being himself one of the chief culprits. One man alone was seemingly unmoved, pursuing his avocations as if nothing had occurred—and *that man was the cook;* though, as the crowning effect of all, the sound of the dinner-bell lost its accustomed charm.

It had come at last, this evil of evils. There lay the mangled end of the Cable; the other end, with 1200 miles of it, being at the bottom of the sea, apparently far from the reach of man. I am not exaggerating when I say that the crash represented a loss of nearly a million sterling, and with it fled, for the time at least, the prospects of the projectors and the hopes of all civilised nations. For though it was immediately resolved to try and grapple the Cable, it was felt that the task was one of great difficulty. We were in a depth of 2000 fathoms, or two nautical miles; and even if we were so fortunate as to succeed in the attempt, the chances of our bringing it on board with such tackle as we

had were slight indeed. We had 5000 fathoms of wire rope, intended to be used for the buoys if required, and it was resolved that so long as it lasted, and indeed until everything available for the purpose was exhausted, there must be no thought of returning to England.

Going back to where the depth was a little under 2000 fathoms, we commenced operations by lowering a grapnel with 2500 fathoms of the wire rope attached. This rope was in pieces of 100 fathoms, joined together by iron shackles and swivels. The grapnel is a species of anchor with five flukes, weighing about 3 cwt., and there being attached at least 500 fathoms of rope over and above the depth of the sea, its whole length trails along the bottom until it meets with some obstruction, which the hooks grapple; and when those extra 500 fathoms are hauled in, and the strain becomes much increased on its leaving the bottom, no doubt arises in the mind of any scientific man that the Cable is securely grappled. Slowly we drifted to the spot where the Cable lay, and at last the vessel turned slowly till her head was brought to wind, showing that the grapnel had met some great obstruction in its passage along the bottom of the ocean. We immediately commenced hauling in the rope at the rate of one mile per hour. When the grapnel had left the bottom, the strain on the dynamometer increased so much each fathom that was drawn in, that no doubt existed that we had

succeeded in grappling the Cable, and anxiously we watched foot after foot brought up on board. When 1100 fathoms had been thus recovered, our hopes increasing every minute, an iron shackle gave way, and the remaining 1400 fathoms of rope, with the grapnel attached, fell to the bottom of the sea.

A buoy being lowered, we steamed ahead in order to make another attempt nearer the end of the Cable. Having reached the desired spot, we dropped another buoy, and then lay to, waiting for a change of wind to enable the vessel to drift over the Cable. At noon on the 4th we were enabled to take observations, and found that, during the foggy night and morning, we had drifted between thirty and forty miles.

The operations of the three following days are easily described. The wind being against us, each night we drifted, and each morning, though sorely baffled by the fog, we steamed in search of the buoy, to the finding of which the Terrible was of great service. But when the fog lifted, and allowed us to ascertain our true position, it was useless, with the wind in a direction with the Cable, to attempt to grapple it, for the vessel must slowly drift broadside over it, and for this purpose both the screw and paddle engines are of no use whatever.

Under all these adverse circumstances a gloomy despair fell on us, and each day seemed to lessen our chances of success. But whatever may have been our individual hopes and fears, we shunned expressing

them, and patience alone was feebly recommended. Wonderful, too, and sad, indeed, was the change in the aspect of the ship. Wandering astern, it seemed like the deserted hive of a once-flourishing community. The long line of lights extending along the paying-out trough from the fore-tank, and ending aft in a brilliant illumination of which a theatrical manager might well be envious, is extinct. No blaze from the blacksmith's forge illumines with ruddy glow the erst-revolving wheels of the paying-out machinery, or the cheery faces of the workmen once around it. The very machine is getting rusty from disuse; the jackdaw has left his accustomed post, and, as if angry at its complete stoppage, has never since been seen. It is a vast solitude, with the signalman for the sole inhabitant; and even he, baffled by the ever-recurring fog, has little or nothing to do. True, there is work going on in the fore-part of the ship, but the men are busy there in making appliances to raise the dead, and not to help the living, Cable. The hope that excites man's best energies is fast slipping away, and, hour by hour and day by day, stronger grows the impression that all human efforts (at least with such tackle as we had) are unavailing to bring to light our lost Cable.

Yet not until those efforts have been tried to their utmost strength will the pluck of such men as Captain Anderson, Messrs Canning and Clifford, and all under them, give way; so, the weather at last clearing up,

on Monday the 7th of August we made for the buoy, in sight of which the Terrible remained with most laudable pertinacity. At 11 A.M. the grapnel was again lowered, and again was the Cable securely grappled; but, alas! a swivel gave way with a loss of 1500 fathoms more of our wire rope, and once more were our hopes doomed to disappointment.

A consultation was now held amongst the chiefs of the expedition, and it was determined to make a final attempt. There were still 2000 fathoms of wire rope left, but much of this was useless, and had to be cut out, for the strain on it had been so great that the lay of the rope, which, before being lowered, was only ten inches in length, had been pulled out in parts to twenty-seven inches. The shackles and swivels were all taken out and replaced by others made on board, of better material, and capable of bearing a greater strain. Throughout Wednesday, day and night, the ship presented a scene of great activity. Every carpenter and blacksmith was employed in making such alterations as would most likely prevent the recurrence of such accidents as caused the two former attempts to fail. Little thought of sleep had any one on board. The blacksmith's musical hammer was heard throughout the night, whilst on the busy scene the forges threw a light which would have sent Rembrandt into an ecstasy.

The picking-up machinery having become disabled from the extraordinary work it had been put to per-

form, and being at all times but ill adapted for raising the grapnel, it was resolved to use the capstan alone for that purpose; but the diameter of the latter being too small in the centre, strong timbers were fitted and fixed so as to increase it from two feet six to five feet six inches; it was then cased with sheets of iron firmly riveted, giving it the appearance of a solid drum. There being only about 1700 fathoms of wire rope fit for use, the extra portion required was made up of a thick hemp rope and a good-looking manilla rope, which seemed capable of bearing any strain. All was now ready for our final attempt, and anxiously we longed to commence operations.

On Thursday, the 10th of August, the wind, which had blown hard throughout the two previous days, accompanied by a drenching rain, suddenly dropped, and shifted to a point very favourable for enabling the vessel to drift over the Cable, which we hoped to grapple much nearer the broken end, so as to have as little strain as possible in hauling it on board. At 7.45 A.M. the grapnel was lowered, and slowly we drifted towards the desired spot; but the summer gale had caused the buoys to shift their places, so that it was noon before we could ascertain the right position. At 1 P.M. the strain increasing gave us hopes that we had grappled the Cable, but it soon ceased, and at 4 P.M., it being concluded that we had passed over it, orders were given to haul in and make a fresh attempt.

So tedious was the process of hauling in, that it took thirteen hours to bring the grapnel on board. It was found covered with a soft pasty substance of a pale yellow colour, and several gentlemen having obtained some of the precious substance, it was investigated with a microscope; and Dr Ward found shells, in one of which there was living matter, thus disproving the assertion that life could not exist at such a depth. At 12.30 P.M. on Friday, August 11th, a day long to be remembered, the grapnel was lowered for the last time, and at 3.50 P.M., the strain on the dynamometer indicating that we had once more grappled the Cable, we commenced hauling in, and at 7 P.M. had succeeded in recovering about 800 fathoms. I was then standing near the capstan watching the rope being drawn in, with an average strain of from 80 to 90 cwt. A snatch-block had been fixed to the deck and to a spar above, through which the rope had to pass in order to bring it on a level with the capstan; no doubt a clumsy appliance, but, unfortunately, the only one available; and, indeed, everything brought into service during the grappling was but an expedient, for it had never been thought possible or probable to perform such an operation at so great a depth, and no preparations had therefore been made. Well, the last shackle of the manilla rope was passing through the block with heavy jerks when the rope itself snapped at the splice. "Hold on, boys!" shouted

Mr Canning (now only thinking of the men's safety), and for a moment its lightning speed was arrested by the vigorous arms of the men at the rope-stoppers, thus preventing the destructive rebound, but not for long: escaping from their grasp, it passed swiftly over the wheels, and speeding like a shot from the bow, it fell with a heavy swish into the greedy waters.

All was over. Every yard of material had now been exhausted—what human power and ingenuity could do, had been tried—the last hope of recovering the Cable was for the present put an end to; and reluctantly, the order being given, 'South-east by east," the vessel was slowly put on her course to England, the Terrible, after a speedy "good-bye," proceeding alone to Newfoundland.

For ten days, with little intermission, had this battle been fought; and at last, however unwillingly, human power was forced to succumb: and it did so with dignity; for it is a glorious feature in the natures of most practical men, that failure never produces despair. Whilst there is a thread of hope to cling to, nothing is dreamt of but success; and when the irretrievable disaster comes at last, they at length take their sleep, and, wiping from the brain all of the past that is unavailing, turn their attention solely to the future.

Intensely interesting had been the whole voyage, and especially so to witness this last struggle, though

almost hopeless from the first, against superior force, and with materials so ill adapted for the purpose, yet carried on with such persistent energy and such unwearied attention on the part of the chief workers, that even for their sakes alone I could not help deeply regretting that success had not attended such noble efforts. Yet, looking at the amount of experience gained, who shall say that the result is not in a high degree satisfactory? It has been proved that the Cable was of the right specific gravity, and its great strength was shown by its holding the buoys even in a stiff breeze, though the portion used for that purpose had been picked up from a great depth, and had been put to a severe strain; it was proved that the paying-out machinery was absolutely perfect, and that the method employed of paying the Cable out from coils instead of reels is by far the best; it has also been proved that it can be safely picked up at nearly the greatest depth known in the course taken between Valentia and Newfoundland; and lastly, to the wonder of all on board, it has been proved that it can even be grappled at that depth, and that with proper tackle there would be every probability of its being raised successfully.

Much unnecessary, and I venture to think unjust, censure has been cast on the engineers, by those wise people who judge after the event, for the inefficiency of the picking-up machinery. The real progress of science must ever be affected by circumstances, and

perfection can only be safely reached by the sure paths of experience. Messrs Canning and Clifford had hitherto found the apparatus in use perfectly satisfactory, and during this voyage it had picked up the Cable from a depth of two miles; nor, with the exception of the breaking of a bad valve-rod which really caused no delay, did it fall to pieces until after grappling had commenced. Now Mr Canning's observation when the Cable broke—"ALL IS OVER!"—proves that grappling at two miles was never contemplated, and was resorted to rather as an experiment than with any hope of success; but now that it has been proved that the Cable can be grappled at so great a depth, no doubt the skill and ingenuity of those practical engineers will make the machine fit for hauling in the grapnel, and proof against any strain to which it may be subjected. To require human foresight to provide for evils utterly unknown, is simply demanding an impossibility. I have the best authority for stating that had the picking-up machine been used solely for the purpose for which it was made (with the trifling exception alluded to), we should have returned to Sheerness with all its gear as perfect as it was when we started.

We had a very fine passage home, never shifting our sails till after we passed Cape Clear, and at a speed of nine knots per hour, which, under all circumstances, was more than we expected. I could have wished to have obtained some details as re-

gards the consumption on board. Of our live stock there only remained fifty sheep, a few pigs, and some score or so of fowls; but the havoc made must not be wholly ascribed to the voracity of man. In taking my morning stroll amongst the animals I daily noticed a gap in the oxen-shed, and knowing that there was plenty of fresh meat in the ice-cellar, I was anxious to know the reason. The butcher (he is not an Irishman) informed me that the oxen were killed in order to save their lives, and that their gradual decay was owing to the water they drank. I am not sufficient of a chemist to know the properties of condensed water, but however great a blessing is the discovery of turning the sea-waves into fresh water, it certainly does not contribute to the prolongation of animal life. It had been death to the ducks, the cow, and the oxen; nor had it improved the sheep, so destroying their natural instincts that they tamely submitted to the interested caresses of their greatest enemy, the two-legged wolf. The pigs alone have thrived, but on what will they not fatten and grunt? To dismiss these interesting creatures: the fifty sheep have been purchased by Mr Gooch; and "Billy," round whose neck the young Russells tied a pink string to save him from the butcher's knife, is to pass the rest of his days in clover.

Early on Thursday, August 17th, we reached Crookhaven, and there Dr Russell, with three other

gentlemen, left us. And here I would offer a word of advice. If you wish your friend to retain a lively impression of you, don't get up early to see him depart. A more miserable set of unwashed, uncombed, unrefreshed, half-awakened, and breakfast-craving mortals I never beheld, than the gentlemen who crowded the paddle-boxes to give a parting cheer to those who then left the ship.

Reaching Lizard Point on Friday morning, we steamed up the Channel, which was as smooth as glass, and hove-to, at 9 A.M. on Saturday, about two miles from Brighton, where many of the passengers landed; and on Sunday at noon the Great Eastern was anchored at her old moorings, having been absent five weeks and one day.

And thus, with the fairest prospect of success—in spite of arrangements made with the utmost liberality, and in spite of the great skill and care bestowed in carrying them out — either through accident or design (let us hope the former), one of the noblest enterprises ever undertaken by man has for the moment failed. But it is not in the nature of the Anglo-Saxon to accept defeat as final, but rather to look on each failure as a step nearer to success. Let all honour be paid to those who have worked so bravely to obtain a satisfactory result. It is from the knowledge of their great abilities the belief is encouraged that time alone is wanted to ensure complete success. With such a ship as the Great East-

ern, guided by so skilful a commander as Captain Anderson, and with such men as Messrs Canning and Clifford to superintend the machinery, and Messrs de Sauty and Saunders to conduct the electrical operations, there is every reason to indulge in the most sanguine expectations.

Yet is there wisdom in not being over-confident. Sweet are the exulting pœans of victory, but it were better not to sound them until the battle is won. It is well to be hopeful and sanguine, for except under the influence of such feelings no great work can ever be accomplished; but to express those hopes as if they were already realised, before an atom of work has been done to ensure success, will too often lead to regret and mortification, as, unfortunately, has been the result in the present instance.

And yet I have no doubt whatever of final success. No matter what faults arise, whether caused by accident or malice, with picking-up machinery as perfect in its working as that made for paying out the Cable, no more serious misfortune can happen than is produced by a temporary delay. The next expedition, I hope and believe, will meet with complete success; and my only wonder is, that such has not been the result of the present undertaking.

LIFE IN CENTRAL ASIA.

[*MAGA.* MAY 1857.]

AGAIN the course of events is directing the progress of British influence and empire towards the savage mountains and wild deserts of Central Asia, which, possibly enough, may never directly repay the cost of occupation, but constitute not the less on that account the citadel of the East, and would be most valuable to us in political and military points of view.

In these present circumstances, and under the shadow of coming events, it may not be amiss for us to give some sketches of Central Asia, of its inhabitants and their singular life. Abundance of interesting material on this subject exists in works already published; but these works are in themselves so well worthy of perusal, that we prefer drawing on the stock of our own personal experience, not without the hope that even a few slight sketches may direct some readers to the writings of more enterprising and accomplished travellers. For, perhaps, there is no

literature more peculiarly British, and almost none more worthy of careful perusal, than that which relates to explorative travel. The peculiar genius which enables a man both to undertake and describe such travel, involves many high qualities of mind and character. Instinctive it may be, even as that of the statesman, the warrior, or the poet; but it is a rare and noble instinct, wisely implanted by the hand of God in a few of our race. It is an instinct which was necessary to the progress of the world, which opened the path to the founders of our Indian Empire, and tracked over the wild Atlantic the way to the wide-waving corn-fields and sugar-brakes of America. Far be it from us to make any pretensions to such peculiar distinction. Indeed, it is rather difficult now to find an explorable new country, and the enterprising traveller will soon have to mourn, like Alexander, over a conquered world. In the loneliest dell of Cashmere, Alastor would meet, not the Spirit of Solitude, but some sporting officer or sallow Punjab civilian enjoying a few weeks' leave. The ascent of the "heaven-ascending" peaks of the Gavahir themselves would be embittered by the recollection of a book having been published with the impertinent title, 'A Walk over the Himalayas,' as if the walk was quite insignificant—a mere Saturday afternoon's exploit. From Baghdad to the Caspian, and from the Caspian to Herat, the Hindu Kush, and farther Bokhara, we may tread in the footsteps of our country-

men who have gone before, and add our stones to the lonely cairns of those who have fallen by the way. But though Central Asia affords no field for geographical discovery, yet it presents vast districts almost unknown and peopled by singular savage nomads, and may readily afford more interesting material for description than any which can be gathered on the great highways of the world. More particularly we hope to entertain the reader when he passes with us through the Hala mountains into Beluchistan, and encamps (in fancy as we in recollection) by the wells of ancient Gedrosia, from which not more than two or three Europeans have drank since the ground was trampled round them by the hosts of the retiring army of Alexander.

There are many centres where the intelligent traveller may place himself in contact with numerous varieties of Eastern race and character. In Cairo we may see Arabia, Syria, and all the north-east of Africa. Aden is not a bad point, about the time of the Hadj, for meeting with Mohammedans; but no one feels inclined to stay longer than he can help in that fiery, dusty, extinct volcano. Bombay is the great port of the Arabian Gulf, and presents greater variety of nationality and costume than any other town it has been our fortune to visit. When the cool evening breeze is sweeping over the pale blue of the sea, or still later, when the distant ghauts have been veiled

by the night, so welcome to the wild beasts with which they abound, it is like enjoying a dream of the Arabian Nights to wander slowly through the crowded bazaars and the palm-groves of Bombay. In the open carriage which swiftly passes, we get a glimpse of the pale face of some English lady, languidly reclining beside her husband, the Secretary to Government, too tired with his day's labour to do more than passively enjoy the coolness of the night. The buggy which tears along behind has in it a couple of intoxicated English sailors, who make the *buggy-wallah* goad on his wretched horse, by punching and kicking him, he consoling himself with thinking of Jack's drunken generosity. In the neighbourhood of the *bunders*, all varieties of the African *homo* are to be seen; the lithe Somal, with nothing but a blanket round him; the stout, short, brown Abyssinian; and the huge coal-black Seedy, newly arrived from the Mozambique coast, with his incomprehensible alternations of savage sulkiness and maniacal good-humour. Short but brawny Mahratta coolies, from the Concan-Ghaut-Mahta, trudge sturdily along with palanquins, or bearing great loads upon their heads. They always prefer to carry loads in that way; and when a benevolent gentleman gave wheelbarrows to a number of them, the coolies whipt up the barrows upon their heads, whenever he was out of sight, and went off gratified and triumphant. Hindus, old and young, Bunyas and Brahmins, with red turbans and white,

pass in streams through the bazaars where the waving lights of the open shops make everything bright as day. Here a lemon-coloured Chinaman displays his ivory toys; there a row of Arab horse-dealers sit smoking and drinking coffee. The ancient fire-worshippers look far more fat and fair than the miserable Indo-Portuguese, who move, in dirty white jackets and trousers, as if all their stamina were gone. In side-streets there are black Jews from Cochin, and golden-coloured ones from the banks of the Euphrates. An experienced eye will soon detect stranded Italians, Germans, and Poles, who have reached India in mysterious ways, with vague notions of making their fortune there, but who find themselves more wretched than ever. Hideous sounds, meant for music, with doleful howling, induce us to glance into the temples where the followers of Siva are worshipping ugly stones smeared with red paint and oil. Where the air is heavy with the fragrant perfume of tropical flowers, and the tall palms are rustling gently above, the lights and music of the wealthy native merchant's *nautch* invite us to enter his bungalow and behold how Paphian girls of various climes can sing and smile. Then it is not only the mere outside life, such as the streets of a European town present, which is disclosed. It is rather as if we walked the streets of a European town with the power of seeing through window-curtains and stone walls. Through the broad plantain-leaves the English party is seen dining under the waving

punkah. We hear the coolie asking his wife, while he beats her for not having made enough bread, if she wants him to die *starving*. Household matters are unconcealed. And the life of half a million of the human race—for such population has the town of which we speak—is laid open, so that he who walks or rides may read.

But for Central Asia, Kurrachee, the port of Sind, is the most convenient point of observation. Surely no one ever approached it with the intention of remaining there for some time, without feeling a little dismay and sinking of the heart. The Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the upper part of the Arabian Gulf, are bounded by the waste places of the earth—hot sandy shores, spotted with dreary mangrove swamps, and rising up into red precipitous mountains which seem to flame even in the summer heat. The broken malaria-covered swamps, through which the waters of the Indus find their way into the sea, are succeeded, as we approach Kurrachee, by low sand-hills extending along the coast to Cape Monze, a huge promontory of red sandstone ending a vast range of sterile mountains, which stretch away to the north-east for hundreds of miles beyond eyesight till lost among the ranges of distant Afghanistan. Dreary enough looks the aspect of things after we cross the bar and prepare to land. A long bunder-road, with Arab budgerows loading and unloading on one side of it, and on the other a dark muddy swamp, full of dead fish and shell-

fish, excrement of aquatic birds, and rotting plants, leads up to a barren sandy plain, on a slight elevation of which stands the cantonment. Clouds of sand and dust dash furiously at the astonished visitor. The dry heat, if the wind is from the land, cracks his skin. He is ready to curse the country as bearing nothing but sand, salt, and soldiers.

A very little acquaintance with it, however, will convince him that it has many compensating advantages. The dry, elastic, invigorating air of the desert is very exciting, so much so, indeed, that for some days the stranger feels his brain painfully active, and strongly suspects that the European residents in Sind are all insane. From October to March the weather is very pleasant, and though it may be very hot during the day, yet towards sunset, and on till morning, he finds a sharp cold, unknown in Hindostan, which enables him to enjoy once more the luxuries of a fire and of hot punch. Considering that Sind is in what is called a "rainless district," he is agreeably gratified by seeing magnificent ranges of heavy clouds lying along the hills of Beluchistan, which are only about twenty miles distant, and these coming down in rain on heavy blasts of wind, until the country is changed from dust and sand into mud and water. Oh! the pleasant relief from those eternal blue skies, about which romantic young ladies in England, who have never experienced them, talk so enthusiastically! The European in Sind, who has escaped from the

Indian eight months of eternal blue, will undoubtedly, when he rises on the first wet, cold, raw, misty morning of December, be inclined to use the language of the Madras colonel, who came on deck the first misty morning in the English Channel, rubbing his hands and exclaiming—"Ah! that's the thing; none of your d—d eternal blue skies here!" No doubt the dry heat, and the great changes of temperature, are somewhat dangerous to human life, inducing fever and dysentery of the most inexorable kind; but then, until he becomes seriously ill, he finds himself healthy and active in an unusual degree. There being an average of 70 deaths annually at Kurrachee for every 780 Europeans, the ratio of deaths must be between 9 and 10 per cent annually, while in England it is only between 1 and 2 per cent. That fact, when he discovers it, may make him look upon the cold mornings as treacherous in their pleasantness—as pleasing, indeed, like "pegs"—glasses of *brandy-paunee*—so called from their supposed effect in closing the coffin-lid upon the son of Adam; but, like these, certain to be fatal in the long, or rather short run.

Perhaps this may have the effect of impressing upon him, if he be of a serious reflecting mind, the duty of taking example from the busy bee, and improving each shining hour, in a country where the hours are very shining indeed. What would most of us not give could we place ourselves for a few months in Perth, not in the year 185–, but in the days of the

Fair Maid? And in the year 185– Sind borders on countries where the state of society is as wild, irregular, clannish, freebooting, hospitable, and murderous, as it ever was of old in the Scottish Highlands. Gone is the romance of the Highland clans. Still the stag may drink at "Monan's Rill," and make its lair deep in "hazel shade," but no hunter's horn or chieftain's whistle shrill can people the lone hillside with five hundred warriors keen. No more the hardy Cateran drives the Sassenach's fat cattle before him, on scanty paths, to his inaccessible retreat; he only drives down nowt to Falkirk Tryst, from "ta ponny land o' ta whisky still." "Donald of the Smithy, the Son of the Hammer," puts large stones at the Inverness Games, instead of filling "the Banks of Lochawe with mourning and clamour." Only an Edinburgh professor roams disconsolate among the hills of Braemar, crying,

> "Woes me, woe! what dole and sorrow,
> From this lovely land I borrow!"

While an unfeeling public asks, "Why borrow?" and advises him to pay back his loan as soon as possible. But the primitive virtues still remain among the mountains of Central Asia, and Kurrachee is sufficiently close to these hills to allow an opportunity (even to respectable persons like professors) of making tolerably safe acquaintance with living "lords of the glen."

On the one side of the Hala (not indeed, at their base, where the Beluch still rules, but nearer the

banks of the royal Indus), we find the bungalows of Europeans open to receive us, active English magistrates superintending public works, or administering justice in their cutcheries, companies of European artillery and Sepoy regiments, with young beardless English officers, drilling in the cool of the morning. Everywhere our white faces command respect from the natives of the country, and our *impedimenta* are in no danger of being taxed or taken by roving chiefs. Very different is the behaviour of the Sindians to us, from what it was in 1613 to Sir Robert Shirley, a British ambassador to Persia, who was detained at the mouth of the Indus, saw Mr Ward, one of his companions, shot dead before his face, and experienced the greatest difficulty in escaping to Agra, where he was courteously received by Jehangir. Even in 1801 the English mission to the Ameers was subjected to many annoyances and insults. But all that is changed now; for we are the *Sahib Log*—the ruling people, the masters of the hour, masters of the destinies of India and of Sind. Even the erewhile Beluch chief who fought against Sir Charles Napier on the fields of Meeanee and Hyderabad, humbly makes to us his salaam.

On the other hand, again, when we have approached the Hala, or passed through them into the country beyond, it is very necessary to wrap ourselves in the cloak of prudence. No white faces meet our eye, but only swarthy Beluches, brown Brahuis, and travel-

ling Afghans. No forehead will be touched at our approach; and to our respectful *Salaam Aleikoom*, there will sometimes not even be vouchsafed a scowling *Aleikoom Salaam*. Instead of cantonments and bungalows, we find the mud-built and mud-walled town of some Jam or Khan, or other territorial chief, the black tents of some wandering Beluch tribe, or the loose branches which form the only shelter for the encampments of the Lumri and the Brahui. The journeys are from well to well, or from valley to valley. We require to travel with fire-locks in our hands, or near us, in the care of some trusty servant; when lying down to sleep, they must be at our side. The Afghan and Beluch are not inclined to regard us with either overwhelming admiration or very tender affection; and when they catch us in their own hills, it is just possible they may think us fair game, for robbery and warfare are familiar to them from childhood.

However, even without entering into the dangerous country, much may be seen of its inhabitants. The Sindees themselves are a timid fusionless people, much given to the use of opium and bhang (*Cannabis indica*), but some amusement may be got from them as they appear in the gardens of the Fakeers, close to the native town of Kurrachee. These gardens contain some splendid trees, chiefly banyan, and during the day afford umbrageous protection to the debauched Fakeers, who require rest after the exertions of the

night. In the evening these faithful few make great efforts, by trumpet and voice, to intimate that the time for evening prayers has arrived, but the intimation also means that their gardens are about to be opened to the public. In one or two, portions of the Koran may be read; but the most usual amusements are gossip, story-telling, bhang and arrack drinking, opium and tobacco smoking, beating on the *dol* or kettle-drum, praying, howling, singing, and dancing. There the Eastern mind may be seen to perfection, with its union of romance and meanness, of mystery and grossness. Of course, as the night advances, matters do not improve. The holy men become more excited, less particular in regard to forbidden things, and howl more. The *dol* sounds more furiously; the dancers (among whom, by this time, are women) dance until they fall down from fatigue or intoxication; and the stories become quite frightful when they are not incomprehensible.

In the cold season large numbers of Afghans and Beluches come down to Kurrachee with horses for sale, and encamp on the *meidan* or plain, close to the Fairshed. Each *caffilah*, or small caravan, has its horses picketed in a circle, within which they sleep round a fire, and seldom with any other covering than a large *burnous*, or sheepskin coat. The Afghans, or Pathans, as they call themselves, are often large fair men, with strong bodies and fleshy limbs. Some of them have even light-coloured hair and eyes. They

are all very bold and independent, without being insolent; treating Europeans as equals, but taking care not to break any of our regulations. They are also very conversible, and have many stories to tell about the dangers they escaped on the way down with their horses, from the Beluches, whom they both fear and abominate, calling them *Adam-khoor*, or men-eaters, an appellation which, in its literal meaning, is quite undeserved. These last mentioned are evidently quite out of their element on British territory, and do not show to advantage as commercial men. Like Catiline, the Beluch is *alieni appetens, sui profusus;* he likes to take violently, and he likes to give patronisingly; but this matter of exchanging horses and dogs for Company's rupees, and these rupees again for cotton cloth, lead, and gunpowder, strikes him as rather beneath his dignity, and makes him think uneasily of his fierce forefathers. By way of being independent, he is savage and surly. His broad hairy chest, and long sinewy arms, are those of a man whose boast is, that in close combat he can strangle his foes, or tear out their windpipes. Even the boldest of us would shudder at the idea of being overpowered by that demon, and of looking up hopelessly for mercy into the wild-beast eyes which glare ferociously under his shaggy brows, and villanously low forehead. Even the Pathans, however, are rather savage men, though they dare not put their peculiar notions into practice when, as merchants, they are travelling or sojourning

in a strange country. During our residence at Kurrachee, some fifteen or twenty of them were sepoys in the 8th Regiment of Native Infantry, the rule having been abrogated which, at one time, forbade their admission into the Anglo-Indian army. The consequence was that a number of singular outrages were perpetrated, which for some time quite baffled the police. Sindees and Cutchees were found lying dead —killed, apparently, by stones thrown with great force and dexterity. Officers' bungalows were entered at night, and robbed while the inmates were sleeping. The police *puggies* or trackers (in a desert country like Sind footsteps are easily tracked, and some men specially devote themselves to the occupation) could find nothing more suspicious than what appeared to be marks of camels' feet. The boldness and unprecedented character of the outrages threw speculation quite at fault. Considerable alarm was excited in houses outside, or on the outskirts of the camp ; and revolvers immediately rose to a premium. A quarrel among themselves, which led to the treachery of one, disclosed that these depredations were committed, and that very systematically, by the Afghans of the 8th Native Infantry, who managed to steal out at night, in small parties, from the lines of their regiment, and who baffled the *puggies* by binding up their own feet in rags, a stone being placed under the instep, so as to leave no distinct impression of a foot upon the sand. It being thought expedient to capture some of

these ruffians in the act, a trap was laid for them, the desperate resistance they were to offer not having been anticipated. The captain of police and his lieutenant, both English officers, concealed themselves, with a few friends and native police, in a bungalow which had been fixed upon for robbery. Two Pathans entered the garden about two o'clock in the morning; and a stone, skilfully thrown by one of them, killed the dog at once. At first they mistook the police for their comrades; but, on discovering their mistake, they fought so furiously with stones and with their long knives, that it was not until they were, literally speaking, *cut down* that they could be secured. Captain M., who at Meeanee had killed several Beluches in hand-to-hand conflict, had some of his teeth knocked down his throat by a stone which one of the robbers hurled.

The horse-dealers and merchants encamped at the Fairshed perpetrated no such crimes; and though they must have been sorely tempted to rob each other, they wisely abstained. Perhaps it was difficult for them to do so; for each party had its watchful guardians, in the shape of those large, shaggy, dun-coloured savage bear-dogs, which are to be found among all the mountains which sweep from Cape Monze up to the sources of the Indus, and round to Thibet. The appearance of these animals is usually something between that of a Newfoundland and a dog of the St Bernard breed; but in some of them a

cross with the wolf or the hyena is quite apparent. One dog, which we picked up at Bela in Beluchistan, was marked exactly like a hyena; it had no bark, only a howl, carried its head like a wild beast, and was very intractable and treacherous. Several experiments with dogs purchased from Afghans were not very encouraging, for they refused to accommodate themselves to anything like civilised life. Only one could we attach to our own person, and there he stopped, resolutely refusing to acknowledge such things as friends and acquaintances, and holding obstinately by the theory that his master's hand was against every man. When loose, he lay in wait for all visitors, and cunningly attacked them behind just as they were entering the bungalow; when chained, he barked and howled until he broke loose, or worried himself into temporary suffocation. To the *nowker log*, or domestics, he was an object of the utmost dread and veneration. In vain they attempted to propitiate his favour by giving him choice morsels; he took the meat, but growled at them all the time to show his incorruptibility. When they entered our sitting-room, he would steal behind, and playfully give their calves a gentle squeeze, just to remind them what they were about. Nothing could reconcile him to the *mehtur*, or sweeper, who, under protection, washed him occasionally; that unhappy individual applied for an advance of wages, and finally left our service, on the ground of his life being in danger.

When we dined from home, that dog's face was certain to look in at the door, in order to see if we were safe; but an unconquerable aversion to society prevented him from entering farther. We cannot altogether ascribe to him the character which Byron gave to his dog—"strength without insolence, courage without ferocity, and all the virtues of man without his vices;" but not even the large hound who lies at our side, looking up with intelligent soft brown eyes, as if he knew what we are writing about, can altogether compensate for the loss of that rough savage Kootch—that

> "Poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
> The first to welcome, foremost to defend;
> Whose honest heart was still his master's own,
> Who labour'd, fought, breath'd, lived for him alone."

Besides the Asiatics we have alluded to, there is excellent opportunity in Sind for studying the Brahuis, who abound also in Beluchistan. They are supposed to belong to the aborigines of Asia, to the Vindhya race, which is to be found in the Deccan, and of which Burton supposes there are traces even in Arabia. Considerable doubt may easily be thrown on this view; but suffice it here to note, that the traveller may meet numbers of Brahuis without venturing into or beyond the dangerous defiles of the Hala. The *buglahs* bring over Arabs from Muscat to Kurrachee, and Persians from the Gulf. Artisans from Kutch and Guzerat are to be found in consider-

able numbers; as also merchants and contractors from the Punjab. It is even recorded that a Frenchman once made his appearance in the cantonment, but found no one who could speak with him except Mr Frere, the able and accomplished commissioner in, or governor of, the province; and in our day a veritable Tübingen Ph.D. was there, with whom we might presumptuously dispute on questions of philology, but with whom we could always become one again over longing recollection of the *Eberhardkarls-Universität.*

Living at Kurrachee, a sort of Central Asiatic fever is apt to seize upon the mind. Every evening we gazed on the line of savage, habitationless, precipitous mountains standing so distinct against the clear calm sky, until the desire to pass beyond them became a passion which compelled "the power to roam." Each morning the strong sunlight fell into every rugged pass and jagged cleft; and even through the wavy heats of the day, between the circling sand-storms, there were seen, dimly looming, those great frontiers of the forbidden land. Singular feelings were aroused by the thought that it was possible to set off any day from our door, and walk or ride on to Tartary, or almost to the Pole, with scarcely any interruption from the dwellings of men. When the *caffilahs* began to start on their return journey northwards or westwards, it seemed easy to accompany, for a short distance, the gaunt camels, which moved slowly, and

with almost spectral motion, across the sands, that gleamed like a golden sea under the great sunlight, like a silvery plain under the full moon. Even the indefinite danger of the attempt gave it enchantment. The vast circling pillars, which the wild Eastern imagination regards as evil demons circling over the earth; the black wall of the great sand-storm coming up before the wind and hiding the sun; the red sandstone peaks, where

"Faint and sickly winds for ever howl around;"

the flaming wilderness of rock, where no signs of life refresh the eye; the sun-blacked Beluch haunching his ill-conditioned but trusty mare in a cloud of dust, as he half threatens with his braggart sword; the pains of the scorching ride; the annoyance of the noisy arrangements; the dangers of the night encampment;—might not such things be remembered with pleasure long after they had ceased to trouble, while many singular pictures would remain, from that of the green mountain-valley, or the short Brahui goatherd drawing water from the deep-sunk well, or the comely Beluch woman handing to her lord the frugal draught his flocks afford, to the white domes of *musjid* and *minar*, where

"'Mid far sands
The palmtree-cinctured city stands?"

But even the most reckless is apt to hesitate about starting into a country from which, he is informed,

travellers have very little chance of ever returning. No doubt a *caffilah* of Afghans may promise to protect him, but who is to vouch for the Afghans, and how is he to return when he leaves them? No certain information could be obtained in regard to the safety, or even possibility, of travelling in Beluchistan, for though its frontier was within twenty miles' distance, that country was eschewed and ignored. The only satisfactory account of it was to be found in the travels of Lieutenant (afterwards Sir Henry) Pottinger, who in 1809, when the country was utterly unknown to Europeans, disguised himself as an Eastern horse-dealer, and, partly in company with Captain Christie, partly alone, penetrated from Sonmeanee on the coast to Khelat, and from thence passed into Persia by way of Noosky and Bunpoor, travelling for some time in only his shirt and drawers, enduring other almost incredible hardships, and making many narrow escapes. At a later period, Sir William Harris, the noted African traveller, failed even in an attempt to reach Hinglaj on the coast of Mekran, and had to make a very hasty retreat on a swift horse. Our interference with Khelat was supposed to have irritated the Beluches against us, while their unavenged success in massacring our soldiers there might reasonably be supposed to have made them presumptuous. One Englishman, we were informed, had recently contrived to travel a long way on the coast of Mekran, and another had passed through the Bolan; but both

had died in consequence after their return to Sind, and nothing whatever seemed to be known of the state of the rest of the country.

These facts, which constituted our whole knowledge on the practicability of the attempt, were not very encouraging; but it was our fate to accomplish it, and with ease. "*Inshallah!*" we said, "we shall try; probably they will take us for mad, and receive us with veneration." Perhaps the southern Beluches are not so fierce as those of the north; perhaps, from the contiguity to British territory, the British traveller is covered by the broad shield of his country's reputation; perhaps percussion-cap firearms are more formidable than matchlocks; perhaps these savages are not very savage after all; or perhaps this contributor may be destined to an exit not usual in uncivilised countries; — some or all of these causes may have contributed to his safety during a few weeks' excursion through Las, and small portions of Jhalewan and Mekran.

The notion of travelling with a party of Afghans was given up, because, being ignorant of the Pooshtoo language, we could not hope to keep up pleasant friendly relations, or easily detect any treachery which they might meditate.

It was impossible to find any companion who could be persuaded that it was his destiny to "do" Beluchistan; and the more so, because no officer could obtain leave for any such outrageous purpose. Of course it

was necessary to have camel-men and servants, but the former of these were not easily obtained, and the latter, already in employ, objected strongly to crossing the frontier, after they consulted the bazaar upon the subject. These difficulties were at last got over, but the want of any one on whom we could rely in an emergency, was but ill compensated for by the number of attendants. A small hill-tent, grain for a horse, as well as provisions, &c., required to be carried, and so it was found necessary to take one riding and four baggage-camels, these being attended by three camel-men, two of them Sindees, and the other a Sind-Beluch. A horse-keeper, a cook, and a personal servant, together with a negro peon, made up a very respectable small *caffilah;* but in all probability these attendants, excepting the negro and horse-keeper, would have been worse than useless in any fighting other than with the tongue. The disastrous Somali expedition has shown well how little dependence can be placed on Eastern servants when a sudden attack has to be withstood. The smaller the number, the more likely are they to stand by their master when required, and the more unlikely to give notions of his wealth which may arouse cupidity. It is always best to have them as much as possible from different castes, for then their mutual dislike and jealousy act as a check on the evil practices in which they may be inclined to indulge. It was rather difficult to get these servants started on the journey, for at the last

moment the most of them hung back and wished to escape. Also just after crossing the border they caused considerable trouble, but once well into Beluchistan, the "law of thumb" (no other law being recognised there) could be applied to them in a very decided way. Their terror was not much to be wondered at, for though the border was so close to the British cantonment, only a week before we started, a tribe of Beluches carried off four hundred head of cattle belonging to British subjects, which cattle were grazing on debatable ground, and the bazaar at Kurrachee was full of very exaggerated accounts of the occurrence. Once fairly in the strange country, they felt themselves so helpless, and so dependent for protection on their European head, that they became perfectly obedient, and gave little or no trouble. Indeed, at times they showed a disposition to presume upon our leadership, and once we detected them in an attempt to bully a goat-herd and his wife out of a kid, by threatening our indignation in case of refusal. Eastern servants, it is well known, are not much addicted to truth, and constantly glorify their masters with an eye to glorifying themselves. If you have three hundred rupees *per mensem*, your servants solemnly declare that you have got a thousand, and readily invent details of expenditure in order to give their statement verisimilitude. Of course they were cautioned against indulging in this kind of exaggeration in Beluchistan; and with considerable tact and wisdom they confined

themselves to most fabulous statements regarding their master's ferocity, and skill in the use of arms and medicine. It is very doubtful whether there is such a miscreant in existence as they made us out to be. As to firearms, we could do little more than hit a barn-door within a reasonable distance, or rather a hyena close to our tent, for there are no barns there; but they seemed to have lied themselves into the notion that we could exterminate a whole tribe, and then, like Hotspur, cry "fye upon this quiet life." Such exaggeration, however, though absurd enough, was of the greatest possible use, and often procured us a dinner from men who refused either to sell or exchange. For poetic invention, our *ghorawallah*, or horse-fellow, was the king of the party; and on one occasion, with his aid alone, we actually terrified a hostile encampment of about fifty persons into giving us the breakfast which at first they refused in no very respectful way. On another occasion a small roving tribe commenced to plunder our camels, and had broken open one box; but as we rode slowly up, in ignorance of what was going on, the same discreet servant's account of us induced the depredators to make off hastily, and so prevented a collision which could not have been agreeable, and which might have put an end to further progress. The danger of such incidents as this last mentioned, contributed, on the whole, rather to increase the tedium than the excitement of the journey. Of course, it

is rather exciting to know that you are in danger of being stopped and robbed, or fired at by matchlock-men securely posted in rocks above; but then, when the danger rarely makes its appearance, it is not pleasant to have to keep beside the baggage-camels. Wherever the country was said to be very danger-ous, we did not wander far from our servants and camels, and they only progressed at the rate of two miles an hour, taking almost an entire day, when there was little or no moonlight, to make a journey of twenty miles. Where the people of the district were found or represented to be tolerably quiet, and infor-mation could be obtained of any encampment, village, or well, which might serve as a place of rendezvous, our plan was to start off the camels and servants for that place at daybreak, either providing them a guide or leaving them to find their own way, as seemed best in the circumstances. We then set off on horseback, accompanied by our *ghorawallah*, who had a smatter-ing of several of the languages spoken in Beluchistan, on the riding-camel, which we could mount whenever tired of horseback, and on which there was secured a small water-skin, perhaps some provisions, ammuni-tion, and a few medicines. In some parts it was necessary to place a *bhoomia*, or guide, upon the camel, but most usually we two started alone on our adventures with hearts "prepared for any fate." The hours of the morning were usually spent in shooting, there being an abundance of hyena, antelope, black

partridge, duck, geese, teal, flamingo, and, wherever there was a river with water, crocodiles. As the sun rose and its heat became intense, we sought some encampment—for we soon became adepts in discovering these—uttered a most friendly *Salaam Aleikoom* to the men composing it, who, generally speaking, had never seen a white man before, and without giving them time to recover from their surprise, seated ourselves in the shadiest and most comfortable corner we could find—taking care, however, to keep our fowling-piece between our knees, and a smaller weapon of destruction in our belt, in case of any of those little accidents which are apt to happen in Beluch families. Once seated, most usually everything went on well, for curiosity, especially among the fairer sex, was the prevailing passion. Though most devout Mohammedans, the women wore no veils; they talked quite freely, and sometimes did not even hesitate to examine closely the hair and texture of the skin of the white stranger—a liberty which, we need scarcely say, was not indiscriminately accorded. When the questions came too thick and fast, our faithful attendant made a diversion by informing the savages of our skill in medicine, which was very small indeed, but superior to any other they could command, and immediately all the halt, the maimed, and the feverish demanded aid from the strange and wonderful *hakim*. This justified a call for refreshment, which usually consisted of goat's or buffalo's milk, and roast, or

rather broiled, kid. That finished, and a pipe smoked, the medical cases were examined, and anything was done for their relief which could be effected in the circumstances. Then, perhaps, weapons were examined, a strange song was sung, or a dance gone through, and we departed to seek out new encampments, or to find the well to which our camels had gone. Not unfrequently night would find us bewildered in jungle, among perplexing rocks, or seeking for the well, and no well appearing. In such cases the fires of some encampment usually appeared after dark, and, making our way to it as well as we could, we supped there, and fell asleep beside a fire, watching the stars through the scanty covering of bushes, with our gun for bedfellow, but gratefully acknowledging that, after all, the Beluches were much better than they got credit for being,—that they, too, had human hearts beating under their dusky skins, and had been taught to keep faith with the stranger and sojourner in their wild land. These were pleasant days; many strange sights were seen and curious adventures experienced. When compelled to keep beside the baggage-camels, the journey had far less interest. The slow wearisome swinging on the camel became almost intolerable during the great blinding and burning heat of the day. At the villages and towns, of course, a different course of life was pursued. Our tent there was pitched outside the walls, and under some convenient tree, for, owing to their great

jealousy of strangers, the authorities invariably objected to our sleeping inside; but they allowed us to lounge about the bazaars during the day, and to have interviews with various parties. Perhaps even this might have been denied, had it not been for some letters of introduction (written in Persian) which we had contrived to obtain from merchants in Sind and from British authorities. These last we applied for just before starting, and had forwarded by a runner, being aware that an Order in Council of the Governor-General forbids all aid and encouragement to (if it did not even actually prohibit) any passage by Europeans beyond the western frontier of British India.

The peculiarities of travelling in Beluchistan cannot well be appreciated without some general idea of the character of the country, and that is not very easily conveyed. A desert country, a mountainous country, a fruitful country, a cold country, and a hot country, are designations which suggest tolerably distinct ideas; and we shall suppose, in order to give a notion of Beluchistan, large samples of all these countries well shaken together, thrown down at the head of the Arabian Gulf, allowed to settle into a land, covered with snow and ashes, and then broken up again in an irregular way. It is as nearly a primeval country, "without form and void," as it is possible to conceive any country to be. The Beluches themselves account for its present condition by a very characteristic story. Above their country there are stony Khorassan and

the great desert of Seistan, where the winds at a certain season are so hot and dry, that when a man's body is exposed to them, the skin and veins will crack until the blood pours out, and in a very short time it becomes a mass of putrefaction. Now, they say that Allah made Beluchistan the most perfect land on the face of the earth,—a land where reigned eternal spring or autumn (for if the Beluch who speaks happens to be hungry, he says it was an eternal time of date-ripening, whereas if he be satisfied, he sets it vaguely down as an eternal time of tree-budding), and so lovely, that when the angels flew over it they were always in danger of forgetting His commands; but that Iblis, enraged at such a prospect of bliss for the favoured Beluches, tearing up great ranges of mountains to the north, cast these down upon the beautiful country, and, not content with that, like a dog scraped down upon it with his heels a good quarter of the desert of Seistan. Probably a philosophical German would find this story to be a myth, arising from the ancient and still continued bitter enmity between the Beluches and Persians. But it suits the state of matters so admirably that the wise man will feel inclined to believe it when he hears it related by an excited native, in some beautiful little valley green with grass, shaded by graceful tamarind trees, refreshed by a clear perennial stream, and lively with flocks of sheep and goats, but sunk deep in a great range of red, barren,

rugged, flaming mountains. He may also do well to sympathise with the violent conclusion, quoted from the Koran, "O Iblis! but Allah has said, 'Thou shalt be driven away with stones.'"

Everything about the country is strange to the European, and requires a peculiar mode of life. For a distance of about sixteen miles from Kurrachee, to the Hubb river, which forms the boundary between Sind and Beluchistan, there is a road marked out, though otherwise it cannot be said to be made; and close to the river there is, not a gallows, but a stone *durrhumsallah*, or open building, for travellers, the last sign of civilisation, and warning the traveller that he is about to enter on a region where stone houses are unknown, and where the entire system of law and order,—for there is rule of a kind even in the most savage countries,—is totally different from any to which he has been accustomed. During the greater part of the year the Hubb consists only of detached pools of stagnant or half-stagnant water, in many of which crocodiles may be found; and in its bed there are many "sunny spots of greenery," which form a fruitful subject of dispute between the pastoral inhabitants of either side. On the Beluch side, low jungle and grass stretch up for three or four miles to the Hala—here called the Pubb mountains—which rise up in savage cliffs to about the height of two thousand feet. Not till the traveller passes these can he be said to have fully encountered Beluchistan.

Darkness fell as we approached the pass which led through them towards the north. At their western extremity, where they dipped into the sea, the soft clear light of fading day, which still smiled upon the valley but left the hills in gloom, contrasted so strongly with the deep shadows of the mountains and their rugged sides, dimly seen in the brown air, that no more fitting portal could have been conceived into grim solitudes peopled by wild nomads, savage beasts, or even by giant shades, as Dante's *antichi spiriti dolenti*. But then at the eastern extremity there slowly rose no modest maiden moon, but the full-orbed Queen of Night, which soon obscured even the brightness of the stars, flowed down the valley behind, silvered the jagged mountain-tops, and broke down here and there between the cliffs into the pass through which we rode.

That, however, was an easy *lukh*, or pass, compared with some which we passed through; and thankful were we to escape leaving a camel in any, with its fore-shoulder dislocated, to be devoured by vultures and hyenas. The ranges are often double, or even triple, and the track—for it cannot be called a path—winds up beds of streams, among splintered rocks, along chasms, and up small precipices, in a way which keeps the poor camels, who require to be specially trained for such work, in a state of grievous terror and groaning. One pass took us no less than three days to accomplish, or rather nights, for the

heat in these defiles is so great during the day, that whenever there is more than half-moon, it is best to travel by her light. Beluchistan is out of the tropics, but at certain seasons of the year it is hotter than any portion of Hindostan. Even in spring, the air seemed full of fire during the day, and in the shade the thermometer stood above 110 degrees. But what made the climate peculiarly trying was this great heat being followed in the evening, early morning, and during the night, by piercing cold winds, which came down from the snowy mountains of Sarewan and Jhalewan. With the deserts of Sind upon one side, and those of Seistan upon another, with a broad flat sandy line of coast, which soon vitiates the sea-breeze, with snowy mountains in the centre, few rivers and little vegetation, it is not surprising that the climate is, for the most part, of the very worst kind, and that the inhabitants have been able to preserve the independence of their country from before the days of Alexander until now.

Yet is it these mountains, with their valleys, which redeem the land from desolation. On these clouds gather, supplying many of the valleys with small perennial streams, while, for a season, rivers proceed from the melting snow of the interior. The large valleys are sometimes sixty or a hundred miles broad at their base; they are quite flat, covered with low jungle, and bounded by mountain-ranges which seem, in the distance, to rise up at once high perpendicular

rock-walls from the level plain. There are small towns in them, and round these towns there is a good deal of cultivation—green lanes, with prickly hedges that have even an English look, and large clumps of trees, in which the date-palm is conspicuous. But the greater part of the wide plains may be called prairie-land. One of these, that of the great Poorally valley, reminded us most forcibly of the desolate miasmatic Roman Campagna. In the evening, the same grey poisonous mist rolled over it, which we had watched from the heights of Tivoli, experienced among the Pontine Marshes, and in which it is almost death to sleep, unless the face be covered with a thin cloth. The dull-blue buffaloes, with their long retreating bent horns, which came over the gentle undulations among the burnt-up grass and low stunted trees, were the same as those which abound on the Campagna, and were brought into Italy by Lorenzo de' Medici ; and the few herdsmen to be met with were scarcely stranger or wilder-looking than the "golden-skinned" *Massari*, who, with their sheepskin coats and long lances, are as picturesque as any Beluch or Pawnee. It was only near to the Poorally river that the scene became peculiarly Asiatic. Towards the mouth it was a large sluggish stream ; the banks being here fringed with reeds, there opening out into large flat meadows, and again covered with small but graceful trees lively with parroquets and smaller birds of many brilliant hues. Grassy islets broke the glassy

surface of the water, and on these crocodiles were seen lazily sleeping in the sun, while some sudden splash or muddy gurgle indicated more of those sullen monsters. Thousands of ducks were floating in thickly-scattered flocks near the shore, and a dozen of them were hit at every shot, although it was rather difficult to secure the bodies; for a servant, who rushed in with great enthusiasm to secure some, nearly got his foot snapped off by a crocodile, and rushed back again all trembling, crying, "*Mugger! Mugger!*" Flamingoes, geese, and other large birds were flying about, or wading in the water. The level prairie, with its blue buffaloes, the clumps of trees, the marsh and reeds, the crocodiles, the flamingoes, the flat wide valley, the dim mountains in the distance, with the absence of house, or hut, or human being—all went to form one of those striking scenes of which we have such longing day-dreams in the years of boyhood. It had a singular mystic influence, as the realisation of some "shadowy recollection," or as suggestive of some greater life; for we—

> "Love all waste
> And solitary places, where we taste
> The pleasure of believing what we see
> Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be."

The valleys have but scanty population, but the mountains may be said to have none at all, and some are of very curious formation. We spent two days in attempting to ascend the Vehur range, which

separates the province of Las from that of Mekran, and were foiled after all. Being composed of alternate pyramidal-shaped layers of sandstone and mud, tilted up not far from perpendicular to the height of four thousand feet, and the action of the elements having washed away most of the mud, there remained the curious phenomenon of a mountain-range out of which there had been taken a series of cuts, isolating each remaining slice from every other. Consequently, it was possible to wander for miles through narrow clefts arched by the blue sky; but what with cross passages, sudden terminations, losing oneself in the labyrinth, and ascending delusory slices which turned out to be lower than many around, no real progress was made toward reaching the central elevation, which, after the trouble and danger of mounting some pasteboard-like pyramid a thousand feet high, always seemed as far off as ever. There are other mountains, as portions of the Hala, on which a broad backbone of black basalt has been tilted up through secondary rock; and the summits of these form small portions of table-land. No Beluch of Brahui feeds his flock up there; but the wild mountain-sheep, with their magnificent horns, afford difficult and exciting sport. From the edge of one of the mountain plateaux which we managed to reach, there was a perpendicular fall of at least two thousand feet; and at mid-day the climate was cool and bracing compared with what it was below. It was in the evening that

the mountain-views appeared most striking. The wild confusion of rock beneath spread away in the lurid glare like some primeval world destitute of life. The vast jungly valleys, falling westwards in the distance, seemed like dark but lurid rivers pouring down their molten floods into the glory of the sea. In the utter desolation, where the foot of man had never trod before, the silence was unbroken by any sound. Heaven's deepening blue, the only "thing of beauty there," was serene and passionless, unvexed by any cloud. Beyond our poor earth's rim, the great rosy light of other worlds was fading in the west. A dark shadow seemed to rise up from the earth, and a flood of darkness swept round the basalt cliff that raised its brow above the gloom into the light of stars. So removed were we from all familiar manifestations of earthly life, that we felt as if not upon the earth at all, but alone and newly alighted on some new-born star.

A VISIT TO THE BIG TREES.

BY DR CHEADLE.

[*MAGA.* Feb. 1866.]

WE were in San Francisco, the Golden City of California, the paradise of North Pacificans, and there were many wonders to be seen—gold and silver mines, where hundreds of tons of quartz-rock are crushed daily, and millions of dollars extracted yearly; the cinnabar mine of New Almaden, which supplies quicksilver to the whole world; Yo-Semite, the loveliest of valleys, where, amongst the grand mountains of the Sierra Nevada, a river leaps downs from a height of 2700 feet, and forms the waterfall of the Bridal Veil, the highest in the world. There were geysers, caves, the islands of the sea-lions, and the "Mammoth Trees"; there was a Russian fleet in the harbour, "the Beautiful Menken" at the Theatre, and the "Living Skeleton" at the Museum. We were fairly bewildered by the multiplicity of strange sights awaiting our curious eyes, uncertain which to choose. After mature deliberation, we decided to

bend our steps in the first place to the Mammoth Tree Grove, in Calaveras county, about 150 miles east of San Francisco, on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. We went on board the Cornelia, accordingly, one evening, and steamed all night up the San Joaquin, a tributary of the Sacramento—a narrow muddy stream, running in a most tortuous channel through an extensive marshy delta. The tall reeds which covered the flat expanse were on fire for miles, almost to the water's edge, and we made our way through a sea of flame and smoke, the whole country being lighted up by the vast conflagration. At eight o'clock the following morning we reached Stockton city, and then took the stage-waggon for Columbia, fifty-eight miles distant, and thirteen from the Big Tree Valley. The first portion of the road lay along a broad rich valley, brought almost entirely under the plough, where the undisturbed stubbles told of a fertility unknown in the Old World; for so generous is the soil, that luxuriant crops spring up in the second year without the labour of man, the grain shaken out in the gathering of the first harvest being sufficient for the succeeding one, a "volunteer crop." Although it was past mid-winter—the end of January—the weather was bright and warm as the most genial May; rows of oleanders and heliotropes bloomed in the gardens, ignorant of wintry cold, and strawberries ripened on the sunniest slopes.

Towards evening we began to ascend the lowest

swells of the Sierra Nevada, and entered a country less luxuriantly fertile than the Stockton Valley, and met with numerous monuments of the old "placer" diggings in the shape of "flumes," or wooden aqueducts for bringing water to the mines, and flats where thickly-massed boulders of granite and quartz, uncovered by the miners' work, told of streams which ran there in times gone by, and brought down the golden gravel discovered in the ancient bed. As night closed in we passed through the town of Sonora, and six miles more brought us to Columbia, where we stayed the night at a rough hotel, kept by a Welshman named Morgan.

As the stage did not run beyond this, we hired a buggy and pair and drove over to "Murphy's," a mining town thirteen miles distant, and thenceforward through a picturesque hilly country, where grew in scattered clusters many species of pine, the arbutus, and white jessamine, with evergreen oaks, whose boughs bore numerous branches of mistletoe. The road wound higher and higher up the slopes of the Sierra Nevada, and at dusk we reached the valley of the Mammoth Tree Grove, 4000 feet above the sea. The weather continued fine and the sky cloudless, but at this height the evening air was sharp and frosty, and a thin carpet of snow covered the ground. After a short drive through a forest of lofty pines, we came in sight of the hotel; and 100 yards in front of it, guarding on each side the entrance to

its grounds, grew two of the giant trees. These, named "The Sentinels," although by no means the largest, are very handsome, and of sufficient magnitude to strike the stranger with astonishment, for their height is over 300 feet, and the diameter about 20 feet. At Sperry & Perry's hotel at Murphy's, where we had dined, we had been informed that the hotel at the Mammoth Tree Grove, also kept by Sperry & Perry or Perry & Sperry, was closed for the winter; but Mr Sperry or Mr Perry (it is impossible to say which) kindly offered to accompany us and open the house for our accommodation, and we carried him along with us in our buggy. It was sunset when we got in, and Sperry or Perry hastened to prepare supper, whilst we had a look in the twilight at The Sentinels and the "Big Tree," so called *par excellence*, although it is not the greatest amongst the giants. Its huge trunk now lies mutilated on the ground, having been felled a few years ago, as we were told, to furnish material for walking-sticks, which were eagerly bought by curiosity-hunters. Five men were set to work on it, and it took them twenty-five days to accomplish the task! It was hopeless to attempt to cut it down with axes, and it was therefore bored with augurs, and the intermediate spaces sawn through, and, finally, a wedge and battering-ram were required to effect the fall of the severed trunk, which stood firmly perpendicular when completely cut through. The stump meas-

ures 96 feet in circumference at the base; and the top, cut smooth and even, is 25 feet diameter, without reckoning the bark, which is about 3 feet more. Upon it is built a round wooden house—a ball-room it is called; and a circular room nearly 10 yards in diameter is no mean dancing-saloon. It is said that thirty-two people have danced here in four different sets at the same time, and theatrical performances have been given on the expansive top of this wonderful stump. Near the stump lies a section of the trunk; and some idea of the size of this may be gained from the fact that the writer, a man of 5 feet 11 inches, could barely touch the centre at the smaller end, standing on tiptoe, while at the larger he could in the same manner touch a point about one-third of the whole diameter. The rest of the vast fallen trunk, 302 feet long, had been dressed level, and seemed like a broad terrace-walk, with two bowling-alleys made on it side by side. The amount of timber in this tree is calculated at 500,000 cubic feet! and its age estimated from the annual rings at 3000 years! Before we had sufficiently inspected and wondered at the Big Tree it became dark, and we entered the hotel, where Mr Sperry or Perry had supper ready for us, and in the evening told us the history of the Great Trees.

They were not discovered until the year 1850, when a Mr Dowd, who was out hunting, was led by a herd of deer which he was following into the Big

Tree Valley. He stopped as one enchanted, feeling like Gulliver when lost in the field of barley in Brobdignag—the deer were forgotten, and he gazed with utter astonishment on monsters of vegetation such as he had never even dreamed of as existing in the world. He told his companions of his adventure on his return, but all laughed at his story as a bare-faced attempt to impose upon their credulity; and it was with the greatest difficulty he succeeded in inducing some of them to accompany him to the spot, and verify his statements by actual inspection and measurement.

The newly discovered trees, called *Washingtonia gigantea* by Americans, and *Wellingtonia gigantea* by Englishmen, puzzled the botanists sorely. Some declared them to be a species of cedar, which they certainly closely resemble; others, again, consider them to be of the family of the *Taxodia;* while Professor Lindley doubted whether a new order would not have to be made for them; and it still appears undecided to what order they properly belong. The seed has been largely exported, and young Wellingtonias may be seen gracing many an English lawn. Yet, strange to say, although the seed grows readily, and the trees flourish with rich luxuriance wherever they have been planted, both here and in America, they are, in the natural order of things, limited to two tiny valleys about fifty miles apart. Not a single tree of the kind, except those which have

been lately planted by the hand of man, is known to exist out of the Calaveras and Mariposa valleys. They have never spread from their quiet nooks in the Sierra Nevada, and have remained hidden in its recesses for hundreds, perchance thousands, of years, until discovered in the manner related.

We turned out early next morning into the fresh frosty air, and after breakfast wandered about the grove for several hours, amid a scene of wonders, the mere description of which we should have laughed at as a traveller's tale. There are about one hundred trees of this species, of every age and size, intermingled with various kinds of pines, yews, and deciduous shrubs, and all standing within an area of about fifty acres.

The younger ones are singularly graceful and handsome, but those of mature growth—a few thousand years old perhaps—are a little withered at the top. The enormous trunks are bare and branchless for from 100 to 130 feet, and the boughs seem small in proportion to the central stem.

The effect of the mighty columns rising thickly round, and towering on high, some burnt hollow, in whose cavities a company of soldiers might almost find shelter; others uninjured, solid and massive, the largest and the oldest of living organisms on earth, monuments of ages past, when there were giants in the land, is almost awesome. The great sugar-pines of 300 feet high, and 10 or 12 feet diameter, kings

of the forest elsewhere, seemed mere dwarfs beside those Wellingtonias; and as we walked about, pigmy and insignificant, we half expected to see the strange forms of extinct giants of the animal world, the mammoth or the mastodon of ages still more remote, come crashing through the timber, or the pterodactyl winging its way amongst the colossal vegetation. There stood the "Mother of the Forest," withered and bare, her full height 327 feet, her girth 78 feet without the bark, for this had been removed from 116 feet of the lower portion of the trunk, and the scaffolding erected for the purpose still stood round the tree. This outer shell, thus removed, is now put up, we believe, in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. Thus the two finest trees growing when the forest was first discovered have both been wantonly destroyed for the gratification of curiosity-lovers. There is, however, a still greater than these, decayed and fallen — a stupendous ruin lying half-buried in the ground. It appears to have been destroyed by the fire which has evidently devastated the grove years ago, for many of the standing trees are partially charred, and this one has been burnt into a hollow shell. At the base its girth is 112 feet, and we walked inside the tunnel through the trunk for 200 feet with our hats on. Great must have been the fall of the "Father of the Forest," and numerous large trees have been overthrown or broken off by it when it crashed to the ground. 300 feet from the root it snapped in two,

and the upper portion of it has decayed away, and almost all trace of it has disappeared; but at the point of fracture, or 200 feet from the base, its circumference is 54 feet (18 feet diameter). According, therefore, to the average taper of the other trees, the unbroken stem must have been at least 435 feet high —more than twice the height of the Monument, 95 feet higher than the great chimney at Saltaire, and 30 feet higher than the top of the cross which crowns the dome of St Paul's Cathedral!

The fresh ripe cones of the Wellingtonias strewed the ground, and of these we gathered a plentiful stock; and then, having sufficiently gratified our curiosity, we took to our buggy once more, and on the following day regained that luxurious city, San Francisco.

THE PIRATES OF SEGNA.

ADVENTURES IN VENICE AND THE ADRIATIC.

[*MAGA.* March-April 1844.]

CHAPTER I.

THE STUDIO.

IT was on a bright afternoon in spring, and very near the close of the sixteenth century, that a handsome youth, of slender form and patrician aspect, was seated and drawing before an easel in the studio of the aged Cavaliere Giovanni Contarini—the last able and distinguished painter of the long-declining school of Titian. The studio was a spacious and lofty saloon, commanding a cheerful view over the Grand Canal. Full curtains of crimson damask partially shrouded the lofty windows, intercepting the super-abundant light, and diffusing tints resembling the ruddy, soft, and melancholy hues of autumnal foliage;

while these hues were further deepened by a richly carved ceiling of ebony, which, not reflecting but absorbing light, allayed the sunny radiance beneath, and imparted a sombre yet brilliant effect to the pictured walls and glossy draperies of the spacious apartment. Above the rich and lofty mantelpiece hung one of the last portraits of himself painted by the venerable Titian, and on the dark panels around were suspended portraits of great men and lovely women by the gifted hands of Giorgione, Paul Veronese, Paris Bordone, and Tintoretto. Regardless, however, of all around him, and almost breathless with eagerness and impatience, the student pursued his object, and with rapid and vigorous strokes had half completed his sketch—totally unconscious the while that some one had opened the folding-doors, crossed the saloon, and now stood behind his chair.

"But tell me, Antonello mio!" exclaimed old Contarini, after gazing awhile in mute astonishment at the sketch before him—"tell me, in the name of wonder, what kind of face do you mean to draw around that lean and withered nose and that horribly wrinkled mouth?"

Antonio, however, was so unconscious of the "world without," that he started not at this sudden interruption of the previous stillness. Regardless, too, of the serious and indeed reproving tone of the old man's voice, he hastily replied without averting

his gaze from the canvas. "Hush, maestro! I beseech you. Question me not, for Heaven's sake! I cannot spare a word in reply. The original," continued he, after a brief interval of close attention to his object, and drawing as he spoke—"the original is still firmly fixed in my memory. I see its sharp outlines clear within me, and, as you well know and oft have told me, a feature lost is lost for ever. Alas! alas! those lines and angles around the mouth are already fading into shadow."

After he had thrown out these words, from time to time, like interjections, and with Venetian rapidity of utterance, nothing was audible in the saloon for some minutes but the young artist's sharp and rapid strokes upon the canvas.

"No more of this, Antonio!" at length exclaimed the old painter with energy, after gazing for some time at the gradual appearance of an old woman's lean and wrinkled features, dried up and yellow as if one of the dead, and yet lighted up by a pair of dark deep-set eyes, which seemed to blaze with supernatural life and lustre. At each touch of the artist, this mummy-like and unearthly visage was brought out into sharper and more disgusting relief, when Contarini, no longer able to control his indignation, dashed the charcoal from his pupil's hand. "Apage, Satanas!" he shouted, "thy talent hath a devil in it. I see his very hoof-print in that horrible design."

Startled by this unexpected violence, the young

artist turned round, and beheld with amazement the usually benign features of his venerable teacher flashing upon him with irrepressible anger, which was the more impressive because the Cavaliere had just returned from a visit to the Doge, and was richly attired in the imposing patrician costume of the period. Around his neck was the golden chain hung there by the imperial hands of Rodolph the Second, and he wore the richly enamelled barret, and lofty heron's plume, which the same picture-loving emperor had placed upon his head when he knighted him as a reward for the noble pictures he had painted in Germany. There was a true and fine air of nobility in his lofty form and well-marked features—a character of matured thought and intellectual power in the expansive brow, and in the firm gaze of his large dark eyes, as yet undimmed by age—with evidence of decision and self-respect, and habitual composure in the finely formed mouth and chin. Thus splendidly arrayed, and thus dignified in form, features, and expression, this distinguished man recalled so powerfully to the memory of his imaginative pupil the high-minded Doges of the heroic period of Venice, and the imposing portraits of Titian's senators, that, with a deep sense of his own moral inferiority, he obeyed in silence, and with starting tears removed the offending sketch. Then placing before him a small picture of a weeping and lovely Magdalen by Contarini, which he had undertaken to copy, he began the sketch,

patiently awaiting a voluntary explanation of this unwonted vehemence in his beloved teacher, who, seated in his arm-chair, leaned his head upon his hand, and seemed lost in thought.

And now again for some time was the deep stillness of the studio interrupted only by the strokes of Antonio's charcoal, which, unlike his rapid and feverish efforts when sketching the old woman, were now subdued and tranquil. As he gazed into the upraised and pleading eyes of the beautiful Magdalen, his excitement gradually yielded to the pacifying influence of her mute and eloquent sorrow. This salutary change escaped not the observation of Contarini, whose benevolent features softened as he gazed upon these tokens of a better spirit in his pupil.

"I rejoice to see, Antonio," he began, "that you already feel, however imperfectly, the soothing and hallowed influence of the Beautiful in Art and Nature, and the peril to soul and body of delighting in imaginary forms of horror. If you indulge these cravings of a distempered fancy, you will sink to the base level of those Flemish artists who delight in painting witches and demons, and in all fabulous and monstrous forms. You, who are nobly born, devoted to poetry and fine art, and possess manifest power in portraiture, should aim at the Heroic in painting. Make this your first and steadfast purpose. Devote to it your life and soul; and, should the power to reach this elevation be wanting, you may still achieve

the Beautiful, and paint lovely women in lovely attitudes. But tell me, Antonello," continued he, resuming his wonted kindness, "how came that horrid visage across thy path, or rather across thy fancy? for surely no such original exists. Say, didst thou see it living, or was it the growth of those distempered dreams to which painters, more than other men, are subject?"

"No, padre mio! it was no dream," eagerly answered his pupil. "Yesterday I went in our gondola, as is my wont on festivals, to the beautiful church of San Moyses, which I love for its oriental and singular architecture. When near the church I heard a melodious voice calling to Jacopo, my gondolier, the only boatman in sight, and begging a conveyance across the canal. Issuing from the cabin, I saw a tall figure, closely veiled, standing on the steps of the palace facing the church and occupied by the Archduke's ambassador. Approaching the steps, Jacopo placed a plank for the stranger; but, as she stepped out to reach it, a sudden gust caught her large loose mantle, which, clinging to her shape, displayed for a moment a form of such majestic and luxuriant fulness—such perfect and glorious symmetry, as no man, still less an artist, could look on unmoved. In trembling and indescribable impatience I awaited the raising of her veil. Another gust, and a slight stumble as she bounded rather than stepped into the boat, befriended me; the partial shifting of her veil, which

she hastily replaced, permitted a glimpse of her features—brief, indeed, but never to be forgotten. Yes, father! the face which surmounted that goddess-like and splendid person was the horrid visage I have sketched, lean and yellow, drawn up into innumerable wrinkles, and with black eyes of intolerable brightness, blazing out of deep and faded sockets. Staggered by this unearthly contrast, I fell back upon the bench of the gondola, and gazed in silent horror at the stranger, who answered not the blunt questions of Jacopo; and, as if ashamed of her astounding ugliness, sat motionless and shrouded from head to foot in her capacious mantle. I followed her into the church, but, unable to hold out during the Mass, I left her there and hastily returned to sketch this sublime example of the hideous before any of its points had faded from my memory. Forgive me, father, for yielding to an impulse so strong as to overwhelm all power of resistance. Yet why should I abandon this rare opportunity of displaying any skill I may have gained from so gifted a teacher? Pictures of Madonnas and of lovely women so abound in all our palaces, that a young artist can only rise above the common level by representing something extraordinary, something rarely or never seen in life."

Contarini gazed with sorrowing and affectionate interest upon the flushed features of his pupil, again excited as before by his own description of the mysterious stranger. One less acquainted with human

nature, would have mistaken the flashing eyes and animated features of the youthful artist for the sure tokens of conscious and advancing talent; but the aged painter, whose practised eye was not dazzled by the soft harmony of features which gave a character of feminine beauty to Antonio, saw in the excitement, which failed to give a more intellectual character to his countenance, sad evidence of a soul too feeble and infirm of purpose to achieve eminence in anything, and with growing alarm he inferred a predisposition to mental disease from those morbid and uncontrolled impulses, which delighted in portraying objects revolting to all men of sound and healthy feelings.

He arose in evident emotion, and after pacing the studio some time in silence, he approached Antonio, who, yielding to his eccentric longings, had seized the sketch of the old woman's head, and was gazing on it with evident delight. "Give me the sketch, Antonio," resumed the painter in his kindest tone; "'tis finished, and the hunter cares not for the hunted beast when stricken. What wouldst thou with it?"

"What would I, maestro?" exclaimed the alarmed youth, hastily removing his sketch from the extended hand of the painter. "Finish the subject, of course, and place this wonderful old head upon the magnificent form to which it belongs."

"But, saidst thou not, Antonio, that the poor creature in the gondola hastily concealed her features

when accident revealed them, as if ashamed of her unnatural ugliness? And canst thou be so heartless as to publish to the world that strange deformity she is doomed to bear through life, and which she is evidently anxious to conceal? Wouldst thou add another pang to the existence of one to whom life is worse than death, and whose eternal veil is but a foretaste of the winding-sheet and the grave? Thou wilt not, canst not, my Antonio, make such unheard-of misery thy stepping-stone to fame and fortune." This impassioned appeal to all his better feelings at length reached the heart of Antonio. For a short time he continued to withhold the drawing; but his kindly nature triumphed. Tearing his sketch into fragments, he threw himself into the extended arms of his beloved teacher, who with deep emotion placed his trembling hand on the curling locks of his pupil, and implored the blessing of Heaven on his better feelings and purposes.

With a view to improve the impression he had made, the painter led Antonio round the studio, and sought to fix his attention upon several portraits of lovely women which adorned it. "Here," said he, "are heads worthy to crown that striking figure in the gondola. Behold that all-surpassing portrait by Giorgione, of such beauty as painters and poets may dream of but never find, and yet not superhuman in its type. Too impassioned for an angel, too brilliant for a Madonna, and with too much of thought

and character for a Venus—she is merely *woman*. Belonging to no special rank or class in society, and neither classical nor ideal, she personifies all that is most lovely in her sex; and, whether found in a palace or a cottage, would delight and astonish all beholders. This rarely gifted woman was the daughter of Palma Vecchio, and the beloved of Giorgione, one of the handsomest men of his time; but her sympathies were not for him, and he died of grief and despair in his prime. She was the favourite model of Titian and his school, and the type that more or less prevails in many celebrated pictures.

"How different, and yet how beautiful of its kind, is that portrait of a Doge's daughter, by Paris Bordone! Less dazzling and luxuriant in her beauty than Palma's daughter, she is in all respects intensely aristocratic. In complexion not rich and glowing, but of a transparent and pearly lustre, through which the course of each blue vein is visible. In shape and features not full and beautifully rounded, but somewhat taller and of more delicate symmetry. In look and attitude not open, frank, and natural; but astute, refined, courteous, and winning to a degree attainable only by aristocratic training and the habits of high society. In apparel, neither national nor picturesque, but attired with studied elegance. Rich rows of pearls wind through her braided hair, in colour gold, in texture soft as silk. A band of gold forms the girdle of her ruby-coloured velvet robe, which de-

scends to the wrist, and there reveals the small white hand and tapering fingers of patrician beauty. All this may captivate the fastidious noble; but, to men less artificial in their tastes and habits, could such a woman be better than a statue—and could love, the strongest of human passions, be ever more to her than a short-lived and amusing pastime?

"From these immortal portraits, my Antonio, you may learn that *colour* was the grand secret of the great Venetian painters. *Their* pale forms are never white, nor their blooming cheeks rose-colour, but the true colour of life—mellow, rich, and glowing; both men and women strictly true to nature, and looking as if they could turn pale with anger or blush with tender passion. From these great men can best be learned how much charm may be conveyed by *colour*, and what life and glow, what passion, grace, and beauty, it gives to *form*.

"But I weary thee, Antonio; and after such excitement thou hast need of repose. To-morrow, let me see thee early."

The exhausted youth gladly departed from a scene of so much trial, and hastening to his gondola, sought refreshment in an excursion to the Lido. Returning after nightfall, he landed on the Place of St Mark's, and wandered through its cool arcades until they were deserted. In vain, however, did he strive to banish the graceful form and grisly features of the stranger. The strong impression he had re-

ceived became so vivid and absorbing, that at every turn he thought he saw her gazing at him as if in mockery, and lighting up the deep shadows beneath the arches with her glowing orbs, which seemed to his disordered fancy to emit sparks and flashes of fire. No longer able to resist the impulse, forgetting alike the paternal admonitions of the old painter, and the promises so sincerely given, he quitted the piazza and hastened to the palace of his father, the Proveditore Marcello, then absent on state affairs in the Levant.

Retiring to his own apartment, he fixed an easel with impetuous haste, and by lamplight again began to sketch the Medusa head of the old woman. Yielding himself up to this new frenzy, he succeeded beyond his hopes; a supernatural power seemed to guide his hand, and soon after midnight he had drawn to the life not only the appalling head, but the commanding and beautiful person, of the mysterious personage in the gondola. After gazing a while upon his work with triumphant delight, he retired to bed; but slept not until long after sunrise, and then the extraordinary incidents of the past day haunted his feverish dreams. A female form, youthful and of surpassing beauty, hovered around his couch, but ever changing in appearance. At first her head was invisible and veiled in mist, from which, at intervals, flashed features of resplendent loveliness, and eyes of heavenly blue, which beamed upon him with thrilling

tenderness ; and then the mist dispersed, and the beauteous phantom stooped down to kiss his cheek, when suddenly her blooming face darkened and withered into the death-like visage of that fearful stranger, and her long bright hair was converted into hissing serpents. Starting with a scream of horror from his troubled and exhausting slumbers, he again sought refuge in his gondola, but returned, alas! to make his sketch into a picture, which the hues of life made still more hideous and repulsive. After several days thus occupied, he sketched in various attitudes the imposing figure of the old woman, and endeavoured to fit this beautiful torso with a head not unworthy of it. But herein, after many attempts, he failed. His excitement, so long indulged, had risen into fever. His diseased fancy controlled his pencil, and blended with features of the highest order of beauty so many touches of the old woman's ghastly visage, that he threw down his pencil, and abandoned all further efforts in despair.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAVERN.

The shores of Austrian Dalmatia south of the port of Fiume are of so rugged and dangerous a nature, that although broken into numerous creeks and bays,

there are but few places where vessels, even of small dimensions, dare to approach them, or indeed where it is possible to effect a landing. A long experience of the coast, and of the adjacent labyrinth of islands which block up the gulf of Carnero, is necessary in order to accomplish in safety the navigation of the shallow rocky sea; and even when the mariner succeeds in setting foot on land, he not unfrequently finds his progress into the interior barred by precipices steep as walls, roaring torrents, and yawning ravines.

It was on a mild evening of early spring, and a few day after the incidents recorded in the preceding chapter, that a group of wild-looking figures was assembled on the Dalmatian shore, opposite the island of Veglia. The sun was setting, and the beach was so overshadowed by the beetling summits of the high chalky cliffs, that it would have been difficult to discover much of the appearance of the persons in question, but for an occasional streak of light that shot out of a narrow ravine opening among the rocks in rear of the party, and lit up some dark-bearded visage, or flashed on the bright barrel of a long musket. High above the ravine, and standing out against the red stormy-looking sky behind it, the outline of a fortress was visible, and in the hollow beneath might be distinguished the small, closely-built mass of houses known as the town of Segna.

This castle, which, by natural even more than arti-

ficial defences, was deemed impregnable, especially on its sea-face, was the stronghold of a handful of hardy and desperate adventurers, who, although their numbers never exceeded seven hundred men, had yet, for many years preceding the date of this narrative, made themselves a name dreaded throughout the whole Adriatic. The inhabitants of the innumerable Dalmatian islands, the subjects of the Grand Turk, the people of Ancona—all, in short, who inhabited the shores of the Adriatic, and were interested in its commerce, or in the countless merchant vessels that skimmed over its waters—trembled and turned pale when the name of these daring free-booters was mentioned in their hearing. In vain was it that the Sultan, who in his sublimity scarcely deigned to know the names of some of the great European powers, had caused his pachas to take the field with strong armaments for the extermination of this nest of pirates. These expeditions were certainly not disadvantageous to the Porte, which seized the opportunity of annexing to its dominions some large slices of Hungarian and Venetian territory; but their ostensible object remained unaccomplished, and the proverbial salutation of the time, "God save you from the Uzcoques!" was still on the lips of every one.

The word "Uzcoque," by which this dreaded people was known, had grown into a sound of mourning and panic to the inhabitants of the

shores and islands of the Adriatic. At the utterance of that fearful name, young girls crowded together like frightened doves; the child hid its terrified face in its mother's lap; the eyes of the matron overflowed with tears as the images of murdered sons and outraged daughters passed before her mind's eye, and, like Banquo's ghost, filled the vacant seats at the table; while the men gazed anxiously out, expecting to see their granaries and store-houses in flames. Nor were the seaman's apprehensions less lively, when night surprised him with some valuable cargo in the neighbourhood of the pirates' haunts. Every rock, each tree and bush, became an object of dread: the very ripple of the waves on the shingle a sound of alarm. To his terrified fancy, a few leafless and projecting branches assumed the appearance of muskets, a point of rock became the prow of one of those light, sharp-built boats in which the Uzcoques were wont to dart like sea-birds upon their prey; and, invoking his patron saint, the frightened sailor crossed himself, and with a turn of the rudder brought his vessel yet nearer to the Venetian galleys that escorted the convoy.

At the cry "Uzcoque" the slender active Albanian grasped his firelock, with rage and hatred expressed on his bearded countenance: the phlegmatic Turk sprang with unwonted haste from his carpet; his pipe and coffee were neglected, his women and treasures secured in the harem, while he shouted for the

Martellossi,[1] and slipping them like dogs from a leash, sent them to the encounter of their foes on the devastated plains of Cardavia. In the despatches from Madrid, from the ministers of that monarch on whose dominions the sun never set, to his ambassadors, the name of these seven hundred outlaws occupied a frequent and prominent place. But by none were the Uzcoques more feared and detested than by the grey-headed doge and senators of the Ocean Queen, the sea-born city, before whose cathedral the colours of three kingdoms fluttered from their crimson flagstaffs; and the few young Venetians in whose breasts the remembrance of their heroic ancestors yet lived, blushed for their country's degradation when they beheld her rulers braved and insulted by a band of sea-robbers.

To this band belonged the wild figures, whose appearance on the shore has been noticed, and who were busily employed in rummaging a number of sacks and packages which lay scattered on the ground.

[1] The Turks, finding their own troops not well adapted to the irregular and desperate kind of warfare waged by the Uzcoques, and also unable to compete with them in the rapidity of their movements, formed a corps expressly for the pursuit of the freebooters, which was composed of men as wild and desperate as themselves. With these *Martellossi*, as they were called, the Uzcoques had frequent and sanguinary conflicts. Minucci says of the Martellossi, in his 'Historia degli Uscochi,' that they were "Scelerati barbari anco 'ordine de' medesime Scochi."

They pursued their occupation in profound silence, except when the discovery of some object of unusual value elicited an exclamation of delight, or a disappointment brought a grumbling curse to their lips. They seemed carefully to avoid noise, lest it should draw down upon them the observation of the castle that frowned above their heads, and at the embrasures and windows of which they cast frequent and frightened glances, although the darkness of the ravine, at the entrance of which they had stationed themselves, and the rapidly deepening twilight, rendered it almost impossible to discover them.

"By the beard of the prophet, Hassan!" exclaimed in a suppressed tone a young Turk, who lay bound hand and foot at a short distance from the pirates, "why do these mangy curs keep us lying so long on the wet grass? Why do they not seek their kennel up yonder?"

The person addressed was a little, round, oily-looking Turk, a Levant merchant, whose traffic had called him to one of the neighbouring islands, and who had been laid hold of on his passage by the Uzcoques. He was sitting up, being less strictly manacled than his more youthful and energetic-looking companion; and his comical countenance wore a most desponding expression, as, in reply to the question put to him, he shook his head slowly from side to side, at the same time gravely stroking his beard.

"By Allah!" exclaimed the young man impati-

ently, as he saw the pirates rummaging more eagerly than ever, and now and then concealing something of value under their cloaks, "could not the greedy knaves wait till they got home before they shared the plunder? May their fathers' souls burn!"

"What saith the sage Oghuz?" quoth old Hassan slowly, "'As people grow rich their maw widens.'"

"Silence, unbelieving hound!" exclaimed a harsh voice behind him, and a thump between the shoulders warned the old Turk to keep his proverbs for a more fitting season. The pirate was about to repeat the blow, when suddenly his hand fell, and the curses died away upon his lips.

The clouds that had hitherto veiled the setting sun had suddenly broken, and a broad stream of golden light poured down the ravine, flashing upon the roofs and gables of the town, and making the castle appear like a huge and magnificent lantern. The ravine was lighted up as though by enchantment, and the unexpected illumination caused an alarm among the group of pirates, not unlike that of an owl into whose gloomy roosting-place a torch is suddenly intruded. Terror was depicted upon their countenances as they gazed up at the castle. For a moment all was still and hushed as the grave, and the Uzcoques scarcely seemed to breathe as they drew their greedy hands in silent haste out of the sacks; then, suddenly recovering from their stupefaction, they snatched up their muskets and crowded into a dark cavern in the rock,

which the beams of the setting sun had now for the first time rendered visible, without, however, lighting up its deep and dark recesses. In their haste and alarm, more than one of the freebooters had his tattered mantle caught by the thorny arms of some of the bushes scattered over the shore, and turned in terror, thinking himself in the grasp of a foe. A few only had the presence of mind to throw their cloaks over the varied and glittering plunder that lay scattered about on the ground; and strange was the contrast of the sparkling jewellery, the rich stuffs, and embroidered robes, strewed on the beach, with the mean and filthy garments that partially concealed them, and the wild and squalid figures of their present possessors.

A number of the Uzcoques now threw themselves with brutal violence upon the two prisoners, muffled their heads in cloaks to prevent their crying out, and carried them with the speed of light into the cave, in the innermost recess of which they bestowed them. They then rejoined their companions, who were grouped together at the entrance of the cavern like a herd of frightened deer, and gazing anxiously up at the castle. After the lapse of a very few minutes, the bright glow again faded away, the fortress reassumed its black and frowning aspect, the roofs of Segna relapsed into their dull grey hue, and shadows deeper than before covered the ravine.

Reviving under the influence of the darkness, so

congenial to their habits and occupations, the Uzcoques began to recover from their alarm, and the murmur of voices was again heard as they seized the sacks and hastily filled them with the various objects lying on the beach. Everything being collected, the pirates commenced toiling their way up the steep mountain-path leading to the castle, with the exception of a few who still lingered at the entrance of the cavern, and whom the prisoners could hear disputing about some point on which there seemed to exist much difference of opinion.

"Hell and the devil!" at last exclaimed an impatient voice, in a louder tone than had yet been employed. "There's little chance that we have not been seen from the castle; for the warder would expect us back about this time, and doubtless was on the look-out. These Turkish hounds have seen everything, and might easily betray us. Let us leave them here till to-morrow, till I have spoken to the warder, and arranged that they be sent on at once to Gradiska without coming to speech of the captain. I will join the escort myself to make it still surer."

After some slight opposition on the part of the others, this proposal was adopted, and the remaining pirates took their departure. The sound of their footsteps along the rocky path had scarcely died away on the ears of the anxiously listening captives, when loud acclamations and cries of joy announced the arrival of the first detachment at the castle. The

heavy gates of the fortress were opened with much din and rattle; after a short space they were again slammed to, the portcullis fell, and then no further sound broke the deep silence that reigned in the ravine.

The collection of the plunder, the discussion among the pirates, and their departure, had passed so rapidly, that the young Turk had scarcely had time to recover from the giddy, half-stunned state into which the rough usage he had received had thrown him, when he found himself alone with his old fellow-captive.

"Well, Hassan," said he at last, in a voice of suppressed fury, "what think you of all this?"

The old man made no verbal reply, but merely stroked his beard, shrugged his shoulders, and opened his eyes wider than before, as much as to say, "I don't think at all; what do you think?"

"It is not the prospect of passing the night in this damp hole, bound hand and foot, that chafes me to madness, and makes my very blood boil in my veins," resumed the young man after a pause. "That is a small matter, but——"

"A small matter!" interrupted Hassan, with unusual vivacity. "That is, because you have forgotten the most dreadful part of our position. Bound hand and foot as we are, we can expect nothing less than to fall, ere cock-crow, into the power of Satan."

"Of Satan!" repeated the other. "Has terror turned thy brain?"

"Of a truth, the Evil One has already tied the three fatal nooses which he hangs over the head of the sleeping believer," replied the old Mahomedan in a lachrymose tone. "He who awakes and forthwith invokes the holy name of Allah, is thereby delivered from the first noose; by performing his ablutions, the second becomes loosened; and by fervent prayer he unties the third. Our bonds render it impossible for us to wash, and the second noose, therefore, will remain suspended over our devoted heads."

"Runs it so in the Koran, old man?" asked the youth.

"In the Koran! What Mussulman are you? It is the hundred and forty-ninth passage of the Suna."

"The Suna!" repeated the other, in a tone of indifference. "If that is all it will not break my slumbers."

"Allah protect me!" exclaimed the old man, as he made an attempt to pluck out his beard, which the shackles on his wrists rendered ineffectual. "Allah protect me! Is it not enough that I have fallen into captivity? Am I also doomed to pass the night under the same roof with an unbeliever, even as the Nazarenes are?"

"May the bolt of heaven fall on thy lying tongue!" exclaimed the youth, in great wrath. "I an unbeliever! I, Ibrahim, the adopted son of Hassan, pacha of Bosnia!"

In deepest humility did the old merchant bow his

head, and endeavour to lay hold of the hem of the young man's crimson caftan, in order to carry it to his lips.

"Enough! enough!" said Ibrahim, whose good temper had returned. You spoke in haste and ignorance. I am well pleased when I break no commandment of the Koran; and trouble my head little about the sayings of those babbling greybeards, the twelve holy Imaums."

"But the nooses," expostulated Hassan, not a little scandalised by his companion's words.

"You have nothing to do but to sleep all night without awaking," replied the young Turk, laughing. "Then you will have no need either to wash or pray."

The superstitious old man turned his face to the wall in consternation and anguish of spirit.

"This night have I seen with my own eyes what we have hitherto refused to believe," resumed Ibrahim after a pause, and in a tone of indignation that echoed through the cavern. "I am now convinced that the shameless scoundrels do not rob on their own account, since they are obliged to pilfer and conceal a part of their plunder in order to get a profit from their misdeeds. Marked you not, Hassan, how they trembled when the sun lit up the ravine, lest their tricks should be espied by some sentry on the battlements; and how their panic fear made them carry everything up to the castle?"

The old Turk bowed his head assentingly.

"Glory be to God and the Sultan!" continued the youth. "Before the bright countenance of the Prophet's vicegerent, who reigneth in Stamboul, no misdeed can remain hidden that occurs in the remotest corner of his vast dominions. Nay, much of what happens in the land of the Giaour is also manifest to his penetrating vision. Witness the veil of turpitude and cunning which has long been seen through by the clear eyes of our holy mollahs, and of the council at the Seraglio, and which has just now been torn away from before me, like a mist dispersing in the sunshine of truth. Truly spoke the Christian maiden, whom but a few weeks back I took captive in a fight with the Uzcoques, but who was shortly after rescued by another band of those raging fiends."

"Saw you the maiden," exclaimed Hassan—"the good maiden that accompanies the pirates, like an angel walking among demons?"

"What know you of the Houri?" eagerly demanded the youth, in vain endeavouring to raise his head from the damp stones.

"That it was the hand of Allah that rescued her from you," replied the other. "He chastiseth his creatures with rods, but even in his chastisement is mercy. How many more had not the dogs and the ravens devoured, had the Christian maiden been taken from among the Uzcoques? She belongs to them; she is

the daughter of their leader, the terrible Dansowich, beside whom she is ever to be found, instilling the musk and amber of mildness into his fierce soul, and pouring healing into the wounds he makes. I know her not, but often have I heard the Christians, with whom my traffic brought me acquainted, include her in the prayers they addressed to their God."

"Her eyes were as brilliant stars, and they blinded my very soul," exclaimed Ibrahim impetuously; "the honey of her words dropped like balm into my heart! As the sound of bubbling fountains, and the rustle of flowery groves to the parched wanderer in the desert, fell her sweet voice upon my ear. So gentle and musical were its tones, that I thought not of their meaning, and it is only to-day that I understand them."

"I know not," quoth Hassan, "what you may have seen; but doubtless Satan, who wished to inspire you with an unholy desire for a Nazarene woman, began by blinding you. According to all I have heard, the Uzcoque maiden is good and compassionate, but as ugly as night."

"Ugly!" cried Ibrahim. "Then there must be two of them; for the one I saw was blooming as the spring, her eyes like the morning star, and her cheeks of velvet. Oh that I could again behold her! In that hope it was that I pressed so rashly forward in the fight, and was made prisoner; but yet have I not beheld the pearl of mine eyes."

"She cannot be amongst them," said Hassan; "and thence comes it that the pirates have this year committed greater cruelties than ever, and done deeds that cry out to Allah for vengeance."

"Instead of her silver tones," continued Ibrahim, "I hear the shrieks of the tortured; instead of her words of peace and blessing, the curses of the murderer."

"But what did the maiden tell you?" inquired Hassan, who was getting impatient at the transports of the enamoured youth.

"Her words flowed like a clear stream out of the well of truth. It is not the Uzcoques alone," said she, "who are to blame for the horrors that——"

"Hark!" interrupted the old Turk.

A clamour of voices and splashing of oars became audible, a keel grated on the beach, and then hurried footsteps were heard in the ravine.

"It is another vessel with Uzcoques!" exclaimed Ibrahim; "but these are not laden with plunder, their movements are too rapid."

As he spoke the tumult and murmur of voices and trampling of feet increased, and above all a noise like distant musketry was heard.

"Holy Virgin!" suddenly exclaimed a clear and feminine voice, apparently close to the mouth of the cavern. "They are already at the castle—the gates no doubt are shut, the drawbridge raised. Before they could come down it would be too late."

The young Turk started.

"It is she, Hassan!" he exclaimed. "It is Strasolda, the Christian maiden!"

"Oh, my father!" cried the same voice in tones of heartrending anguish. "How shall we deliver thee? Alas! alas! who can tell the tortures they will make thee suffer in their dreadful dungeons?"

The noise of the musketry became more and more distinct. Some of the newly-arrived Uzcoques who had hurried up the winding path, were soon heard clamouring furiously for admittance at the castle gates.

"They will be too late!" exclaimed the maiden, wringing her hands in despair. The next moment a sudden thought seemed to flash across her mind, lending her fresh hope and energy.

"Gracious Heaven!" she exclaimed in joyful tones. "Have we not here the cave, from which, invoked by fire, the storm and the hurricane, the north wind and the tempest, come forth and shatter the most stately vessels against our iron-bound coast.[1] Up, Uzcoques,

[1] In Minucci's History of the Uzcoques, continued by Paola Sarpi, we find the following: "Segna, through its position on a cragged rock, was unapproachable by carts or horses, and consequently by artillery. The harbour appertaining to it, however, was tolerably good, but exceedingly difficult of access on account of the north wind (*vento di Buora*), which blew almost incessantly in the channel leading to it. According to popular belief, the Segnarese had the power of causing this wind to blow at will, by merely kindling a fire in a certain

and fire the cavern! Let the elements do battle for us. Perchance by their aid the bark of your leader Dansowich may yet escape its foes and reach the haven."

Immediately after these words, which made the two Moslems quail, the pirate's daughter hastily entered the cavern with a blazing torch, the flashes of which awakened from slumber into life and glow the various tints of mosses, lichens, and stalactites innumerable that studded the ample vault. In this flitting and singular illumination, the appearance of the Uzcoque maiden was awful. Above the common stature of woman, and finely formed, she was attired in a white woollen garment, carelessly adjusted and confined at the waist by a broad red girdle, from which it fell in long and graceful folds to her feet. Her face was a perfect oval; her features of regular and striking beauty; her complexion, naturally of that clear rich brown, which lends more lustre to the eyes than the purest red and white, was now ghastly with intense alarm; and this death-like paleness imparted a more prominent and commanding character to her well-defined, jet-black brows, and the full, dark, humid eyes, which gleamed like brilliants

hollow of the cliffs. The mysterious operation of this fire was to heat the veins of the earth, which then, through pain or fury, sent out the raging hurricanes that rendered those narrow seas in the highest degree dangerous, and indeed untenable."

through their long lashes. Heavy tresses of raven hair, escaping beneath her turban-like head-dress, streamed out like a sable banner as she rushed into the cavern, then fell and flowed in waving luxuriance over neck and shoulders to her girdle. The Turks in the interior of the cavern gazed in speechless wonder at this beautiful apparition, standing erect in the strong red light. Waving her torch with energetic and graceful action, she appeared like an antique sibyl at the moment of inspiration, or some Arabian enchantress preparing for an incantation. Their admiration, however, yielded to alarm, when they beheld her dash the torch upon the ground, and her attendants pile upon it straw and fagots, which blazed up instantly to the cavern roof, emitting volumes of smoke that made the captives invisible, and by its suffocating influence deprived them ere long of all power of utterance.

The evening was serene and still, with scarcely a breath of wind stirring, and the flames blazed upward to the cavern roof; only now and then a light breeze from the sea wafted them on one side, and, at the same time, dispersing the smoke, gave the Turks a momentary glimpse of the maiden, standing with uplifted hands, expectation, anxiety, and grief depicted on her speaking countenance, as she invoked the spirit of the storm, while around her stood the few remaining Uzcoques, with sorrowing and downcast faces.

"They come not!" she exclaimed after a pause, during which the fire began to burn low for lack of fuel, and the noise of the musketry diminished and finally ceased. "Uzcoques!" she cried in a louder voice, and with inspiration in her thrilling tones—"take heed and warning, for your hour is come. Your crags and caverns, your rocky shores and howling storms, refuse you further service!"

She paused, and at that moment was heard the rush of a rapidly approaching boat.

"Speak not, ye messengers of evil!" exclaimed Strasolda in piercing accents. "Utter not a word. You have left Dansowich in the hands of the Venetians."

There was no reply to her half-frantic exclamation, and the deep silence was only broken by the footsteps of the new-comers, as with dejected looks they joined their companions. Just then some damp branches that had lain smouldering and smoking on the fire, burned brightly up, and by their light Ibrahim and Hassan beheld the maiden kneeling in the midst of the pirates, her tearful face covered by her fair and slender fingers. The next moment she raised her head and gazed into the cavern.

As she did so, the sorrowful expression of her features changed, and her countenance was lighted up with a look of rapture, while a loud cry burst from her lips. Through the opening in the smoke, the prisoners became visible to her as they lay motion-

less in the interior of the cave, the light from the flames glowing on their red garments, and giving them the appearance of two statues of fire. In the handsome countenance of one of the figures thus suddenly revealed to her, Strasolda recognised the young Moslem, whose prisoner she had been, and whose noble person and bearing, courteous manners, and gentle treatment, had more than once since the day of her captivity occupied the thoughts and fancy of the Uzcoque maiden. Unaware of Ibrahim's capture, Strasolda did not for an instant suppose that she beheld him in flesh and blood before her. To her excited and superstitious imagination, the figures of the Turks appeared formed out of fire itself, and she doubted not that the spirits of the cave had chosen this means of presenting to her, as in a prophetic mirror, a shadowy foreknowledge of future and more favourable events.

While she yet gazed eagerly on what she deemed a supernatural appearance, the rent in the veil of smoke suddenly closed, the flame sank down, and again all was gloom and darkness in the cavern. The thick stifling vapour of the damp wood, augmenting as the flame diminished, was now so overpowering that the Turks were in imminent danger of suffocation. In their extremity, making a violent effort, their pent-up voices found vent in a cry of such startling wildness, that the Uzcoques, struck with terror, sprang back from the mouth of the cave, hurrying the maiden

with them. The cry was not repeated, for the Turks had lost all consciousness from the stifling effects of the smoke.

"Banish your fears, Uzcoques!" exclaimed Strasolda, staying the fugitives. "The voice that to you is a sound of dismay, gives me hope and confidence. I see the golden Crescent rising in irresistible might, and shedding its rays over all the lands of the earth. Happy they on whom it casts its mild and favouring beams, and truer far the safeguard it affords to those who serve it, than that which is found beneath the shadow of the Cross. Better the sharp cimeter and plighted word of the Moslem, than the fair promises of the lying Christian, who, in the hour of peril, abandons those by whose courage he has profited. But enough!" cried she in an altered tone. "Our first duty is to rescue my father from the hands of the Venetians. Go not into Segna. There are traitors there who might reveal what we most wish kept secret. The Venetians know not the person of Dansowich, and that may save him if no time be lost in plotting his deliverance. Let none even of our own people hear of his captivity. Now to the castle."

She led the way, and in silence and sadness the pirates followed the daughter of their captive chief.

The fire was quite out, the smoke had cleared away, the moon poured its silvery light into the cavern, and the stillness was unbroken, save by the ripple of the waves on the beach, when Ibrahim recovered from

the state of insensibility into which he had been thrown by the suffocating influence of the smoke, and heard his companion snoring at his side. For some time the young Turk lay, revolving in his mind the eventful scene he had witnessed, and the strange and startling circumstances that had come to his knowledge during the few preceding hours. The capture of Dansowich was an event of much importance ; nor was there less weight in the discovery Ibrahim had made of the dependence of the Uzcoques upon a higher power, which, in secret, aided and profited by their depredations. Although Austria had been frequently accused of abetting the piracies of the Uzcoques, the charge had never been clearly proved, and to many appeared too improbable to obtain credence. Ibrahim had hitherto been among the incredulous ; but what he had this day seen and heard removed every doubt, and fully convinced him of the justice of those imputations.

Turning in disgust from the contemplation of the labyrinth of crime and treachery to which he had seized the clue, the young Moslem sought and found a far pleasanter subject of reflection in the remembrance of the maiden, whose transcendent beauty and touching devotion to her captive parent, shone out the more brightly from their contrast with the vice and degradation by which she was surrounded. With much interest did he endeavour to solve the problem, and explain what appeared almost

miraculous,—how so fair a creature—such a masterpiece of Heaven's handiwork—could have passed her childhood and youth amongst the refuse of humanity assembled on the island, and yet have retained the spotless purity which was apparent in every look and gesture. But however interesting these reflections were to the enamoured Ibrahim, his recent fatigues had been too great for nature not to assert her claims, and the wearied body finished by triumphing over the rebellious restlessness of the excited spirit. The graceful form of Strasolda, and the wild figures of the Uzcoques, swam more and more indistinctly before his closing eyes, until he sank at last into a deep and refreshing slumber.

CHAPTER III.

THE JEWELS.

The tribe of the Uzcoques, or Scochi, derived their name from *scoco*, a refugee or fugitive, a word bearing reference to their origin. Towards the commencement of the sixteenth century, a band of hardy and warlike men abandoned the provinces of Southern Hungary, Bulgaria, and Servia, and took refuge in Dalmatia from the tyranny and ill-usage of the Turks, who had overrun the first-named provinces. Accompanied by their wives and families, and recruiting their numbers as

they went along, they at last reached the fortress of Clissa, situated in the mountains, a few miles from the old Roman town of Spalatro. There, with the permission of its owner, Pietro Crosichio, they established themselves, forming one of the outposts of Christendom, and thence carried on a war of extermination against the Turks, to whom they did a degree of injury that would appear quite incommensurate with the smallness of their numbers. The name of Uzcoque soon became known throughout the Adriatic as the synonym of a gallant warrior, till at length the Turks, driven nearly frantic by the exploits of this handful of brave men, fitted out a strong expedition and laid siege to Clissa, with the double object of getting rid of a troublesome foe, and of advancing another step into Christian Europe.

The different powers who had benefited greatly, although indirectly, by the enterprising valour of the Uzcoques, neglected to give them the smallest assistance in their hour of peril. After an heroic defence, Clissa fell into the hands of the Turks, and a scanty and disheartened remnant of its brave defenders fled northward to seek some new place of refuge. This they found in the fortress of Segna, then belonging to a Count Frangipani, who allowed them to occupy it; and at the same time, Ferdinand the First of Austria bethought himself, although somewhat tardily, that the Uzcoques had deserved better at his hands, and at those of other Christian princes, than

to be left to their own resources when assailed by the overwhelming power of the Porte. As a sort of atonement, he took them formally into his pay, to assist him in his wars against the infidel. But from this day forward the Uzcoques gradually declined in valour and in moral worth. From a race of heroes they degenerated into a horde of mercenary adventurers, and finally, of cruel and cowardly pirates. Their primitive customs and simple virtues were exchanged for the vices of refugees and criminals from Venice and other neighbouring States, who came in crowds to fill up the frequent vacancies occurring in their ranks.

At length the military value of the Uzcoques being much impaired, and their services also less required, Austria became irregular in her payments, and at last entirely discontinued them. The barren mountains round Segna produced nothing, and the unfortunate Uzcoques were in danger of dying of hunger. This they felt by no means inclined to do, and ere long complaints began to be made of piracies and depredations committed by the Segnarese on the vessels and territory of Venice. For some time no application on the subject was made to Austria, and when made it was found to be of little avail.

At the period to which this narrative refers, Austria had already formed those designs upon her southern neighbour, which in more modern times she has carried out with complete success. The fer-

tile plains of Northern Italy, the convenient ports on the Adriatic, the rich commerce with the Levant, were tempting baits to what was then the most ambitious power in Europe; and with an undeviating steadiness did she follow up the policy which promised to place such desirable acquisitions within her grasp. Venice, whose power and importance were already on the decline, was the State against which her most strenuous efforts were directed; and nothing that could injure the trade, or lower the dignity and importance of the republic, was omitted by the Austrian Machiavels of the day. Insignificant as such a means of annoyance may appear, the band of Uzcoques was one of the prime engines employed to undermine the bulwarks of Venetian independence. Through her commerce had Venice achieved her greatness, and through her commerce was she to be assailed and overthrown. Whilst the Venetians, for the sake of their trade, had formed alliances with the Turks, the Austrians, professing great religious zeal and hatred of the infidels, as well as a dread of further encroachments upon European territory, did all in their power to ruin the traffic and break the connection between the Republic and the Porte. The Uzcoques, who, although asserting a sort of independence, still dwelt on Austrian territory, and were reckoned as Austrian subjects, were secretly encouraged in the piracies which they committed indiscriminately against Turkish and Venetian vessels. These

acts of piracy usually took place in the night, and could rarely be brought home to their perpetrators, although there could be no moral doubt as to the identity of the latter; but, even when proved, it was found impossible to obtain any substantial redress. At the time now referred to the evil was at its height. Nominally at peace both with Venice and the Porte, Austria, nevertheless, stimulated the Uzcoques to aggressions upon the subjects of both. The Archduke Ferdinand, a well-intentioned and virtuous prince, but young and inexperienced, was completely led and deceived by the wily and unprincipled politicians who governed in his name. He was kept entirely in the dark as to the real character of the Segnarese, and thus prevented from giving credence to the frequent complaints made against them by neighbouring States. His corrupt ministers, moreover, not content with making the pirates instrumental in this tortuous policy, were not ashamed to squeeze from them a portion of their illicit gains; and a lion's share of the spoil found its way into the coffers of the archducal counsellors, who welcomed the golden Pactolus, utterly regardless of the foul channel through which it flowed. The Uzcoques, on their part, who were no longer the race of brave and hardy soldiers they had been some half-century before, clung to the protection of Austria, conscious that, in their degenerate state, and with their diminished numbers, they must soon fall a prey to their numerous

foes, should that protection be withdrawn. Thus, although inwardly chafing at being compelled to disgorge a large part of the hard-won booty for which they frequently perilled their lives, they did not dare to withhold the tribute, nor to omit the rich presents which they were in the habit of making to certain influential persons about the archducal court. In return, the ports of Austria on the Adriatic were open to them to build and repair vessels, or obtain supplies of provisions; every species of indirect assistance was afforded them, and more than once, when some of their number had fallen into the hands of the Venetians, their release, as subjects of Austria, had been demanded and obtained by the authorities at Gradiska. On the other hand, the claims of Venice for satisfaction, when some of her richly laden merchantships had been captured or pillaged, were slightly attended to, the applicants put off from day to day, and from year to year, with promises and excuses, until the weak and cowardly republic, seeing that no satisfaction was to be obtained by peaceable means, and being in no state to declare war against her powerful neighbour, usually ended the matter by ceasing to advance claims, the prosecution of which only tended to her further humiliation.

It was Easter Sunday in the town of Gradiska. The strict religious ceremonies with which the Passion-week was commemorated at the court of the youthful but pious Archduke Ferdinand were at an

end; the black hangings disappeared from the church walls, and the bells rang out a merry peal in joyful commemoration of the Saviour's resurrection. The nobles and ladies of the court, wearied with the vigils and fasting which the religious zeal of the time rendered imperative, betook themselves with lightened hearts to their apartments, the elder portion to repose, the younger ones to prepare for the brilliant festival and ball which the following day was to witness.

In a richly furnished apartment of the castle, the young and handsome wife of one of the archducal counsellors was pacing up and down, her full and voluptuous form reflected on every side by the tall Venetian mirrors that covered the walls of the apartment. The lady was apparently in no gentle mood; her step was hurried and impatient, her face flushed, her lips peevishly compressed, and her irritation seemed to increase each time that she passed before a table on which were displayed a number of jewel-boxes and caskets, all open, and nearly all empty. Since the Easter festival of the preceding year, the caprices and necessities of this spendthrift beauty had abstracted one by one the rich kernels from these now worthless husks, and the recollection of the follies, or worse, in which their value had been squandered, now came to aggravate the vexation which the want of the jewels occasioned her. So absorbed was she in the consideration of her annoy-

ances and perplexities, that for some time she took no notice of the presence of a young and graceful female in plain attire, who stood apparently in deep thought in the embrasure of one of the windows. The maiden had her back turned to the room; but the admirable contours of her fine figure, and the rich luxuriance of the jet-black locks that flowed over her shoulders, gave promise of a perfection that was not belied, when, on an exclamation of impatience from her mistress, she suddenly turned round, and revealed the beauteous features of Dansowich's daughter. She it was who formed the usual medium of communication between the pirates and their archducal allies; and during her frequent sojourns at Gradiska, she assumed the character of attendant on the counsellor's lady.

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the court dame, stamping her foot violently on the polished floor. "What can detain the knaves? Say, girl! where can they be lingering?"

Strasolda made no reply to this impetuous inquiry. She was no longer the excited and impetuous Uzcoque heroine, invoking the spirit of the storm amidst the precipices and caverns of her native shores. A total change had come over her. Her look was subdued, her cheek pale, her eyes red and swollen with weeping. She cast a humble and sorrowful glance at the lady, and a tear trembled on her long dark lashes.

"Why come they not?" repeated the angry dame

in a voice half-choked with passion. "By all the saints!" she continued, with a furious look at Strasolda, "I believe thy father, Dansowich, to be the cause of this delay; for well I know it is with small goodwill he pays the tribute. But if the thieving knaves thus play me false, if the Easter gift is wanting, and for lack of jewels I am compelled to plead sickness, and pass to-morrow in my apartment, instead of, as heretofore, eclipsing every rival by the splendour of my jewels, rest assured, maiden, that thy robber friends shall pay dearly for their neglect. A word from me, and thy father, brethren, and kinsmen grace the gallows, and their foul eyrie is levelled with the dust."

Strasolda pressed her hands upon her heart, and burst into a flood of tears. Then throwing herself at the lady's feet—

"That word you will never have the cruelty to utter," cried she. "Bethink you, noble lady, of the perils to which they are exposed. The bravest cannot command success, and you know not yet whether their last expedition may not have been unprosperous."

"I!" replied her irritated mistress. "How should I be privy to their proceedings? But *you* ought to be able to give some tidings. Wherefore did you not accompany your father this last voyage?"

"I told you, lady," answered Strasolda, "that I was busied with plans for the deliverance of the Uzcoques now held captive in Venice. I have

brothers amongst those unfortunate prisoners, and it is the uncertainty of their fate which thus afflicts me."

The maiden gazed tearfully and imploringly at the angry lady. It was not without good reason that she concealed from her the fact of her father's captivity. The stern and inflexible Dansowich had ever viewed with an eye of disapproval the connection between his people and the counsellors at Gradiska; and the latter, aware of this, would not have been likely to take much pains for the release of one who was unfavourable to their interests. It was only, therefore, by representing the captive Uzcoques as less nearly connected with her, that Strasolda could hope for aid to rescue them from the hands of the Venetians.

"So much the more should you desire the arrival of the tribute!" exclaimed the lady. "Did I not, at your request, make interest with our ambassador at Venice, that he should insist upon the surrender of the Uzcoques as Austrian subjects? Assuredly the feeble signoria will not venture to refuse compliance. A casket of jewels is but a paltry guerdon for such service, and yet even that is not forthcoming. But it is not too late to alter what has been done. If I say the word, the prisoners linger in the damp and fetid dungeons of the republic, until they welcome death as a blessing."

"Alas, alas!" sobbed Strasolda; "have you the

heart thus to add to my sorrow? Is it not enough to know those I love in captivity, to behold my people, once so noble and heroic, degraded to the very refuse of humanity, despised and detested of all men, having their dwelling on a barren rock, and earning by crime and bloodshed a precarious existence and doubtful freedom? Is it not enough——"

"Hush!" interrupted the lady in a quick sharp whisper, raising her finger, and glancing towards the door of the apartment. There was a noise as of stealthy footsteps in the corridor. Strasolda sprang from the kneeling posture which she had maintained during her conversation with her mistress, and resumed her station in the recess of a window, while the counsellor's lady snatched up a rich shawl from a damask-covered ottoman, and threw it over the caskets spread out upon the table. Scarcely were these arrangements completed, when the door was partially opened, and a wild sunburnt and bearded countenance showed itself at the aperture.

"Heaven and the saints be praised!" exclaimed the lady. "They are come at last. In with you, Jurissa Caiduch: there is no one but Strasolda here."

The person thus addressed was a strongly built and active man, rather under the middle size, muffled in a coarse brown cloak, which was drawn over the lower part of his face, apparently with a view to concealment. A broad-brimmed felt hat was slouched over

his small black eyes, which glittered through its shadow like those of a snake, never fixing themselves on an object, but casting restless and suspicious glances, as though apprehensive of danger or treachery. Gliding into the room, and closing the door noiselessly behind him, he approached the table, and placed upon it a tolerably large casket, which he produced from under his cloak; then retreating a step or two, he removed his hat, and stood in an attitude of silent respect, his eyes still gleaming, however, with their habitual expression of mistrust and cunning.

Without uttering a word, the lady seized the casket, and impatiently forced open its delicate silver lock. A cry of joyful surprise burst from her lips on beholding the rich contents of the jewel-case. Diamond chains, golden girdles and bracelets, combs and hair ornaments studded with orient pearls, passed in rapid succession through the white and eager fingers of the gratified dame, who seemed to lack words to express her pleasure and astonishment at the sight of such costly gems. At last she turned to the bearer.

"Of a truth, Jurissa," cried she, "you are unusually liberal this time, and you must have great need of the good offices of myself and Father Cipriano, to be willing to purchase our influence with the Archduke at so high a price."

"Our last expedition was a successful one, noble lady," replied the Uzcoque. "The tender-hearted

Strasolda," added he with a spiteful glance at the maiden, who still kept her station by the window, "that guardian angel, who so often steps between us and our prey, was absent, and we had no need to stay our hands."

As he spoke, the door was again hastily opened as softly as before, but somewhat wider, and the burly figure of a monk entered the room. This was no other than the Father Cipriano Guido Lucchese, whom the lady had alluded to, and who, by his pleadings at the papal court in favour of the Uzcoques, had earned himself the honourable cognomen of Ambassador de Ladri, or the Thieves' Envoy. He had expiated his discreditable intercession by a sojourn in the prisons of the Inquisition, which did not, however, prevent his being in high favour with the Archduke Ferdinand, at whose court he filled the triple office of theologian, confessor, and privy counsellor.

The sleek and unctuous physiognomy of the monk wore an expression of unusual care and anxiety. Without bestowing a salutation or a look upon the lady whose apartment he thus unceremoniously entered, he addressed himself at once to the Uzcoque Jurissa.

"Away with you!" cried he. "Out of the palace—and quietly, too, as your own shadow. Thumb-screws are waiting for you if you linger."

Strasolda gazed in alarm at Father Cipriano. Ju-

rissa thrust his right hand under his cloak, and seemed to clutch some weapon. Even the counsellor's dame for a moment turned her eyes from the jewels she was admiring to the anxious countenance of the padre.

"Your last exploit will bring you into trouble," continued the latter to Jurissa. "You have gone beyond all bounds; and a special ambassador has arrived here from Venice."

"Well!" replied the Uzcoque surlily, "was not the sack of doubloons sufficient fee to keep you at your post?"

"I have but just left it," answered the monk, "and you may thank me if the storm is averted for the moment, although it must burst ere long. Before the ambassador could obtain his audience, I hurried to the archduke and chanted the old ditty; told him you were the Maccabees of the century—the bulwarks of Christendom: that without you the Turks would long since have been in Gradiska—that the Venetians, through fear and lust of gain, were hand and glove with the followers of Mahomet—and that it was their own fault if you had to strike through them to get at the infidel: that they cared little about religion, so long as the convenience of their traffic was not interfered with—and that it would be a sin and a shame to deprive himself of such valiant defenders for the sake of obliging the republic. This, and much more, did I say to his highness, Signor

Jurissa," concluded the fat priest, wiping away the perspiration which his eagerness and volubility had caused to start out on his brow; "and, in good truth, I think your paltry bag of doubloons but poor reward for the pains I took and the zeal I have shown in your defence."

"And wherein consists the danger, then," interrupted Jurissa, "since your eloquence has sped so well on our behalf?"

"You do not hear me out, my son," replied the priest. "The greybeards at Venice have chosen an envoy who is right well informed of your small numbers, bad equipment, and cowardice in broad daylight. Nay, man, never grind your teeth. I do but repeat the ambassador's words, for I had stationed myself in an adjoining room, and heard all that passed between him and the archduke. He said moreover that, far from being of use as a bulwark against Turkish encroachments, it was you who had afforded to the infidels a pretext to wrest more than one rich province from Christian potentates. All this seemed to make some impression upon the archduke, and to plant suspicions in his mind which bode no good to you and your race. For the present, the capture of those two Turks, one of whom is a person of rank, is testimony in your favour with his highness, to whom the Crescent is an abomination. Could he follow his own inclinations, he would, I fully believe, start a new crusade against the followers of Mahoun. But

come, Jurissa, this is no time for gossip. You must not be seen in Gradiska. Away with you!"

"And the Venetian," cried Jurissa, "what is his name?"

"It is the Proveditore Marcello, who has lately returned from a long absence in the East."

The Uzcoque started. The name seemed to have some potent and mysterious effect upon him, and he stood for a few moments with his eyes fixed upon the ground, apparently forgetful of the necessity for his immediate departure. The priest took him by the arm and drew him towards the door, which he was about to open, when Jurissa shook off his grasp and hastily approached the counsellor's wife, who had thrown herself into a large gilded chair before one of the pier-glasses, and was busily engaged in trying on the ornaments that had just been brought her.

"Have a care, noble lady!" cried the Uzcoque. "You will do well to let a couple of weeks elapse before you appear in public with those pretty gauds. At any rate, wear them not at to-morrow's ball, lest perchance they find an owner. Beware, lady, of the Proveditore Marcello!"

With a look of peculiar meaning he left the room, accompanied by Father Cipriano. But his warning fell faintly upon the lady's ear, who, though she heard the words, was far too much engrossed in arranging and admiring the costly gems so lately become her own to give much heed to their import.

She remained before her mirror, loading her white neck and arms with chains and jewels, and interweaving diamonds and pearls in her tresses, regardless of the grief of Strasolda, who sat in tears and sadness, deploring her father's increasing peril, and the cloud that menaced the future fortunes of her people.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BALL.

The ancient burg, or castle, of Gradiska had been originally on a larger scale, but at this period consisted only of a centre, flanked at right angles by two wings ending in square towers, large, grey, and massive, and embattled, with overhanging galleries for sentinels to pace along; while similar galleries, on a smaller scale, extended along the entire front and wings of the castle. The central edifice contained on the ground-floor numerous apartments and offices for menials, above which arose a spacious saloon and other lofty apartments, lighted by windows high above the flooring, and terminating in the round-headed arches so commonly seen in the castellated mansions of northern Italy. In this palatial hall preparation had been busy for the ball, to which the wife of the archducal counsellor so impatiently looked forward as an opportunity to eclipse all rivals

by the splendour of her jewels. The hour of reception by the archduke had arrived. The exterior of the spacious edifice was illuminated from end to end by numerous torches, and the capacious staircase was lighted by a double rank of torch-bearers in splendid apparel. In the interior of the vast apartment huge waxen tapers were fixed above the *chevron*, or zigzag moulding, which ran round the walls and connected the casement of each window. Large crystal lamps, pendant from the point of each inverted pinnacle on the lofty roof, diffused a flood of brilliant light, and imparted life and colour to the rich tapestries, portraying stirring scenes from the Crusades, which covered the walls from floor to window. Complete suits of armour, exhibiting every known device of harness, and numerous weapons, fancifully arranged, decorated the spaces between the windows. And now began to appear in this scene of splendour groups of knights and nobles, arrayed in velvet and cloth-of-gold, and attending upon fair dames, sparkling with jewels, and bearing nodding plumes upon their braided hair. Conspicuous amidst these, and towering above all in stature, appeared the haughty mistress of Strasolda, attired in a robe of dark-green velvet, which well relieved the fairness of her complexion, and displaying upon her finely moulded neck and arms a collar and bracelets of large and lustrous oriental pearls. Her fingers were bedecked with costly rings, and upon her head she wore an

ornament of singular device, which soon attracted universal attention. Above the rim of a golden comb, richly chased and studded with brilliants, arose a peacock with expanded tail. The body was of chased gold in imitation of feathers, the arching neck was a mosaic-work of precious stones, the eyes were sparkling diamonds of the purest water, and the feathers of the tail glittered with emeralds, rubies, and sapphires of singular beauty and lustre. So great was the curiosity excited by the dazzling splendour of these jewels, that the fair wearer was followed round the room by a train of ladies, anxious to observe at leisure a display of ornaments so extraordinary, and whispering to sympathising ears conjectures not over charitable to the counsellor's wife. When at length she had seated herself upon one of the sofas which lined the walls, a circle of admiring gazers was formed, whose numbers were rapidly increased by the attendant cavaliers. While the lady was enjoying her triumph, a bustle at the entrance of the hall turned every head in that direction, when the cause appeared in the person of the young archduke, who entered in full costume, followed by a group of courtiers, and accompanied by a Venetian cavalier of tall and commanding person, with whom he appeared to be in earnest discourse. The stranger was a large-boned, spare, and powerful man of middle age, and attired in a black vest and pantaloons of woven silk, with a short cloak of the same hue.

The golden hilt of his rapier, and a gold chain and medallion round his neck, were his only ornaments. His features were large, regular, and grand, and the gaze of his full dark eyes serene, yet firm and potent; his complexion pale, and contrasting strongly with the dark beard which circled his visage like a frame. His high and massive forehead, and well-closed lips, had a character of thought and decision, while his mien and tread were those of one long accustomed to authority. He seemed a man born after his time, and worthy to have lived and acted in the high and palmy days of Venice. After attending the archduke to the steps of the dais at the upper end of the hall, he made his bow, and began to pace the floor in seeming abstraction from the gay scene around him. Arrested in his progress by the numerous group which, after saluting the archduke, had again collected around the counsellor's lady, he paused in returning consciousness; and, looking for the cause of such unwonted attraction, was enabled, by his lofty stature, to obtain a glimpse of the jewelled lady within the circle. Her features were unknown to him; but when his careless gaze fell upon the rare ornament which crowned her redundant tresses, his countenance became suddenly darkened by some strong emotion. Again he looked more earnestly, and with increasing wonder and curiosity. Controlling, by a sudden effort, all outward evidence of feeling, he watched his opportunity, and at length penetrating within the

crowd, stood for some moments before the object of attraction, and gazed, as if admiringly, upon her various adornments in succession; then, bowing gracefully, he addressed to her some words of compliment upon the splendour and value of the dazzling bird upon her head. "Fair lady," he continued, "I have a daughter whom I fondly love, and fain would I bestow upon her youthful beauty such ornament as yours. But say, I pray you, where can the cunning hand be found which fashions such glorious birds? Was it in Venice or Vienna that you bought this masterpiece of art?" Unsuspicious of evil, and bridling with gratified vanity at this attention from a stranger of such distinguished mien, the spoil-bedecked fair one replied to him as she had done to others.

"I bought this ornament, some weeks backs, in Venice, at the store of a Greek trader from the Levant."

"Ha!" exclaimed the stranger; "and where dwelt this Greek, that I may see and ask him for another such?"

The conscious lady, embarrassed by such close questioning, and somewhat alarmed by the kindling glances of the questioner, replied in haste—"Nay, signor, now I remember better, it was not of a Greek I bought these gauds, but of a trading Jew, who walks the Merceria with a box of jewellery."

"Just now, methinks, you said a Greek, fair lady;

and now you say a Jew. What next? Why not a Moslem, or perchance *an Uzcoque?*"

At this ominous conclusion, which the stranger uttered in tones of marked significance, the alarmed culprit started to her feet; and her fierce temper getting the better of her prudence, she boldly faced the cavalier, exclaiming, in a louder key than beseemed a courtier's wife—

"And who are you, signor, that dare thus question the lady of an archducal counsellor?"

"Lady!" he sternly answered, "here I am known to none save your husband's master; but in Venice men call me the Proveditore Marcello."

And now flashed upon the indignant signora a fearful reminiscence of Jurissa's unheeded and forgotten warning, to hide her jewels for a time, and to beware of the Proveditore Marcello. In utter dismay, and nearly fainting with alarm, she sank upon the sofa, and her eyes expanded into the wide stare of terror as she gazed at the menacing visage of the Venetian noble. Unwilling to expose the conscience-stricken woman before so numerous an assemblage, he seated himself beside her, and in tones inaudible to others, thus whispered in her ear—"Lady, but eight days back the jewels that you wear were mine. That peacock was my own design, and made for my daughter by a cunning artificer in Candia. Its like exists not in the world; for the mould was made by my order, and broken as soon as used. 'Twas mine

until the base Uzcoques plundered my baggage. How thus quickly it passed from them to you, is as well known to me as to yourself. But mark me, lady! if all these jewels are not delivered at my apartments in the west wing of the castle ere midnight, I will denounce your husband and his colleagues as long-suspected and now-proved partakers with the Pirates of Segna. And, should redress be denied me here, the ambassador of Venice shall report this infamous collusion before a higher tribunal in Vienna."

Struck dumb by this terrible denunciation, the fair culprit gasped for breath, and her evident distress having been watched in growing wonder by the assembled ladies and cavaliers, the latter began to mutter threats of vengeance. One of them now stepped forward, and, grasping the hilt of his rapier, accused the Venetian of having insulted the wife of a nobleman high in the councils of the archduke, when the Proveditore, looking down upon the courtier with that riveted and intensely piercing gaze which staggers the beholder like a sudden blow, and may still be noted in many of Titian's portraits, answered with brief and startling emphasis—

"Signor! you do me grievous wrong. 'Tis I, and not the lady, who am the injured party."

Awed by his gathering brow, and the settled, stern, unsparing resolution which flashed from every feature, and indicated a man confident in his own resources, the courtiers did involuntary homage to his

loftier spirit, and gave way. The proud Venetian strode through the yielding circle and quitted the hall, while the counsellor's wife, pleading illness and fatigue in reply to the pointed and numerous questions of surrounding friends and enemies, summoned her husband to attend her, and retired to her apartments.

Meanwhile the young Moslem and his companion in misfortune, who had been brought prisoners to Gradiska, were confined in one of the massive towers which flanked the castle. They had arrived not long before the commencement of the festival, and when going under guard along a corridor in the east wing, Ibrahim passed the open door of an apartment in which Strasolda was adjusting the rich jewels of the counsellor's lady before her appearance in the ball-room. Startled by the approaching tramp of armed men, the Uzcoque maiden raised her eyes, and beheld the noble and well-remembered features of the young Turk, whose captive she had been, and whose image had so strangely reappeared to her through the flitting cloud of smoke in the cavern. "Mother of heaven!" she exclaimed, covering her eyes with her hands; "do I again behold that Moslem youth, ever appearing when least expected?" Again she gazed; but the prisoners, hurried onward by their guards, had proceeded to the end of the corridor, where a narrow winding staircase, fashioned in the immense thickness of the tower wall, led to their appointed

prison, a large square apartment, the sides of which were panelled to a considerable height, and imperfectly lighted by small windows, or rather embrasures, perforating a wall many feet in thickness. Here they were left to their reflections, and to what comfort they could derive from a lamp and a supply of provisions. Hassan, wearied with his journey, hastily swallowed his supper, and stretching himself upon a palliasse, soon forgot his calamities in sound repose. Ibrahim, more vigilant and less apprehensive of future evil, as the Turks and Austrians were then at peace, paced awhile along the floor of his spacious prison, musing on the peerless charms of the Uzcoque maiden. From time to time he gazed upon the walls and windows as if calculating the chances of escape, when gradually the peculiar and regular design of the panelling caught and fixed his attention. It was divided by prominent mouldings into oblong squares, from the centres of which projected large diamond-shaped bosses of carved oak. This peculiarity at length roused into action some reminiscences of the early life and adventures of his beloved patron, the Pacha of Bosnia, to the recital of which he had often in his boyhood listened with eager delight. These recollections, at first shadowy and indistinct, became gradually more vivid and accurate, until finally the full conviction flashed upon him that his benefactor, when taken prisoner in his youth by the Austrians, had been confined in this very tower and

room, and, by a singular discovery, had been enabled to liberate himself and his fellow-prisoners. The pacha, then a subordinate in rank, in endeavouring to reach the level of one of the embrasures, had mounted upon the shoulders of a comrade, and was supporting himself by a firm grasp of the large boss in the centre of the panel, when suddenly he felt it turning round in his hand. Surprised to find it not a fixture, he pulled it towards him, and found that it slowly yielded to the impulse. Drawing it out of the socket, he saw it followed by an iron chain, which for a time resisted all his efforts, but at length gave way, and he heard a grating sound like the drawing of a rusty bolt. Suddenly the entire panel shook, and then the lower end started back sufficiently to betray a recess in the wall. Hastily descending from his comrade's shoulders, and pushing back the panel, he discovered that it was supported by hinges, and was doubtless intended to conceal a secret issue from the castle, which he soon ascertained, and effected his escape. These facts were all that the memory of Ibrahim could supply; but they were enough to guide him in his search, and he immediately proceeded to sound the panels in succession with his fist. Commencing with the southern or outer wall, which he supposed more massive and more likely to contain a secret passage, he sounded each panel, and perceiving in the corner one more reverberation than in the others, he roused Hassan from his slumbers. "Hassan! Has-

san!" he exclaimed, "arouse thee, man! and listen to good tidings." The awakened sleeper gazed with half-opened eyes upon his excited companion, and would have dropped to sleep again had not a few words of explanation and the hope of escape fully roused him. Having with some difficulty perched his rotund person upon the ample shoulders of Ibrahim, he followed his directions and grasped the wooden boss, which, to the inexpressible delight of both, yielded, as it had done forty years before to the captive Turk, and displayed the iron chain. Bidding Hassan replace the boss, Ibrahim determined to postpone his attempt until the festival had collected all the guards and menials into the central edifice and its approaches. An hour before midnight, when the young Moslem expected the revelry would be at its height, Hassan again mounted upon his shoulders, and after many strenuous efforts, at length succeeded in drawing up the bolt. The panel receded some inches, and Ibrahim raising it still further, seized the lamp and entered a small oblong recess in the wall, which was not less than ten or twelve feet in thickness. Perceiving no outlet, he examined the wooden flooring, and soon discovered a trap, which, when raised by the ring attached, exposed to view a steep and narrow descending staircase, leading apparently to some sally-port beyond the castle ditch. After carefully trimming his lamp, he was about to lead the way into this dark abyss, when a sound, sharp and

sudden, as of something falling in the adjacent prison, caught his ear. Retracing his steps, he re-entered the apartment, where, after a brief search, he found beneath one of the embrasures a paper folded round a large pebble. Hastily opening it, the following lines, written in the *lingua Franca* so common in the Levant, were visible :—

"Moslem! If thy soul belie not thy noble form and features, thou wilt not withhold thine aid from a bereaved and sorrowing daughter. Before to-morrow's sunset thou wilt be free, for Austria wars not with the Turk. Then straight repair to Venice, and there await the Battle of the Bridge. Take thy stand beneath the portal of St Barbara, and follow the man who whispers in thine ear, STRASOLDA."

"Mashallah!" shouted the enraptured youth, "these lines are from the Uzcoque maiden; and by the gates of Paradise I'll do her bidding, though it perils life."

For a time he was tempted to follow her guidance implicitly, and await the promised release from the authorities of Gradiska; recollecting, however, the proverbial slowness of Austrian counsellors, and too restless and ardent to endure suspense, he resumed his purpose of exploring the secret passage. After he had secured the panel and replaced the boss, he bade Hassan follow him and began to descend. The stair-

case ended in a small passage round an angle, beyond which he discovered a similar descent, followed by another angle and staircase, proving that this secret issue from the castle penetrated through each of the four massive walls which formed the tower. At length their further progress was stopped by a door, originally strong and plated with iron, but now so much decayed, that although fastened by bolts without, the joint strength of the two captives forced it from its hinges. They now entered a vaulted passage of hewn stone, low and narrow, and with no visible termination. As they advanced, the long pent-up and dank unwholesome vapours made it difficult to breathe, and compelled Ibrahim to pause repeatedly and trim his lamp, which burned so dimly in this oppressive atmosphere as to be nearly extinguished. After a while the path began to slope upwards, and ere long they distinguished moonlight faintly streaming through a tangled mass of ivy which concealed the remains of an iron grating, broken probably in his patron's successful attempt to escape by this secret passage from the prison above. Gazing through the aperture, they perceived, not many feet below, what had once been the castle ditch, now dry, and forming a portion of the archduke's gardens. With a joyous heart and an elastic bound, Ibrahim reached the soft turf beneath. The more timid and helpless Hassan lowered himself by clinging to a remaining iron bar, and with the aid of his companion was soon on his

feet, enjoying, with many thanks to Allah, the fresh air of heaven and the consciousness of escape from captivity. The gates of the palace gardens being unguarded during the festival, the liberated prisoners reached the coast without an obstacle, compelled a fisherman to take them in his bark across the Adriatic, and land them on the Lido, which forms the outward limit of the port of Venice. Then making free with an unwatched gondola, they sped across the bay, and were soon in safety, beneath the roof of a Turkish trader and correspondent of Hassan.

Before their escape was discovered on the following morning, the indignant Proveditore had departed for Venice, and Strasolda had disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE.

The time occupied by the events detailed in the preceding chapters had been passed by Antonio in a state of self-exile from his master's studio. Conscious of having disobeyed the earnest injunctions of Contarini, the weakness of his character withheld him alike from confessing his fault, and from encountering the penetrating gaze of the old painter. Neglecting thus his usual occupation, he passed his days in his gondola, wandering about the

canals in the hope of again meeting with the mysterious being who had made such an impression on his excitable fancy. Hitherto all his researches had been fruitless; but although day after day passed without his finding the smallest trace of her he sought, his repeated disappointments seemed only to increase the obstinacy with which he continued the search.

The *incognita* not only engrossed all his waking thoughts, but she still haunted him in his dreams. Scarcely a night passed that her wrinkled countenance did not hover round his pillow, now partially shrouded by the ample veil, then again fully exposed and apparently exulting in its unearthly ugliness; or else peering at him from behind the drapery that covered the walls of his apartment. In vain did he attempt to address the vision, or to follow it as it gradually receded and finally melted away into distance.

It was from a dream of this description that he was one morning awakened by his faithful gondolier Jacopo. The sun was shining brightly through his chamber windows, and he heard an unusual degree of noise and bustle upon the canal without.

"Up, signor mio!" cried the gondolier joyously, and with a mixture of respect and affectionate familiarity in his tone and manner. "Up, Signor Antonio! You were not wont to over-sleep yourself on the day of the Bridge Fight. All Venice is hastening thither. Quick, quick! or we shall never be able to make our way through the press of gondolas."

The words of the gondolier reminded Antonio that this was the day appointed for the celebration of a festival, which for weeks past had been looked forward to with the greatest impatience and interest, by Venetians of all ranks, ages, and sexes; a festival which he himself was in the habit of regularly attending, though on this occasion his preoccupied thoughts and feelings had made him utterly unconscious that it was so near at hand.

Although the ancient and bitter hatred of the Guelphs and Ghibellines had died away, and the factions which divided northern Italy had sunk into insignificance nearly a century before this period, the memory of their feuds was still kept up by their great grandchildren, and Venice was still severed into two parties or communities, separated from each other by the Grand Canal. Those who dwelt on the western or land side of this boundary were styled the Nicolotti, after the parish of San Nicolo; while those on the eastern or sea side took the appellation of Castellani, from the district of Castello. Not only the inhabitants of the city itself, but those of the suburbs and neighbouring country, were included in these two denominations; the people from Mestre and the continent ranging themselves under the banners of the Nicolotti, while those from the islands were strenuous Castellani.

The frequent and sanguinary conflicts of the Guelphs and Ghibellines were now replaced and commemorated

by a popular festival, occurring sometimes once, sometimes oftener in the year; usually in the autumn or spring. "In order that," says an old chronicler of the time, "the heat being less great at those seasons, the blood of the combatants should not become too heated and the fight too dangerous." "Also on cloudy days," says the same authority, "that the spectators might not be molested by the sun; and on Sundays or Saints' days, that the people thereby might not be hindered from their occupations." On these occasions one of the numerous bridges was selected as the scene of the mock combat that constituted the chief amusement of the day. The quays afforded good standing-room to the spectators; and here, under the inspection of ædiles appointed by the people, the two parties met, and disputed for supremacy in a battle, in which, however, no more dangerous weapons than fists were allowed to be brought into play.

It was not the populace alone that divided itself into these two factions. Accordingly as the palaces of the nobles stood on the one or the other side of the canal, were their owners Castellani or Nicolotti, although their partisanship existed but in jest, and only showed itself in the form of encouragement to their respective parties; whereas with the lower orders the strife, begun in good-humour, not unfrequently turned to bitter earnest, and had dangerous and even fatal results. In the wish, however, to keep up a warlike

spirit in the people, and perhaps still more with a view to make them forget, in a temporary and boundless licence, the strict subjection in which they were habitually held, the senate was induced to permit the continuance of a diversion which, from the local arrangements of Venice, the narrowness of the streets and bridges, and the depth of the larger canals, was unavoidably dangerous, and almost invariably attended with loss of life.

Hastily dressing himself, Antonio hurried into his gondola, in order to proceed to the bridge of San Barnaba, opposite to the church of the same name and to the Foscarini Palace, that being the spot appointed for the combat. The canal of the Giudecca was one black mass of gondolas, which rendered even a casual glimpse of the water scarcely obtainable; and it was amidst the cries of the gondoliers and the noise of boats knocking against each other, that the young painter passed the Dogana and reached the Grand Canal. There the crowd became so dense, that Jacopo, seeing the impossibility of passing, turned aside in time, and making a circuit, entered the Rio de San Trovaso, whence, through innumerable narrow canals, he succeeded in reaching the scene of the approaching conflict.

The combatants were attending Mass, and had not yet made their appearance. Wonderfully great, however, was the concourse of spectators already assembled. Since sunrise they had been thronging

thither from all sides, eager to secure places which might afford them a good view of the fight. Every roof, gable, and chimney had its occupants; not a projection however small, not a wall however lofty and perilous, but was covered with people, for the most part provided with baskets of provisions, and evidently determined to sit or stand out the whole of the spectacle. In the anxiety to obtain good places, the most extraordinary risks were run, and feats of activity displayed. Here might be seen individuals clambering up perpendicular buildings, by the aid of ledges and projections which appeared far too narrow to afford either grasp or foothold; further on, some herculean gondolier or peasant served as base to a sort of human column, composed of five or six men, who, scrambling over each other's shoulders, attained in this manner some seemingly inaccessible position. The seafaring habits of the Venetian populace, who were accustomed from boyhood to climb the masts and rigging of vessels, now stood them in good stead; and notwithstanding all the noise, confusion, and apparent peril, it was very rarely that an accident occurred.

Under the red awnings covering the balconies and flat roofs of the palaces, were seated groups of ladies, whose rich dresses, glittering with the costliest jewels and embroideries, appeared the more magnificent from being contrasted with the black attire of the grave patricians who accompanied them. But perhaps the

most striking feature of this striking scene was to be found in the custom of masking, then almost universal in Venice, and the origin of which may be traced in great part to dread of the Inquisition, and of its prying inquiries into the actions and affairs of individuals. Amidst the sea of faces that thronged roofs, windows, balconies, streets, and quays, the minority only were uncovered, and the immense collection of masks, of every form and colour, had something in it peculiarly fantastic and unnatural, conveying an impression that the wearers mimicked human nature rather than belonged to it.

Venice, whose trade and mercantile importance were at this period greatly on the decline, saw nevertheless, on occasions like the present, strangers from the most opposite nations of Europe, and even Asia, mingling peaceably on her canals. Here were Turks in their bright red caftans and turbans; there Armenians in long black robes; and Jews, whose habitually greedy and crafty countenances had for the nonce assumed an expression of eager curiosity and expectation. The mercantile spirit of the Venetians prevented them from extending to individuals the quarrels of States; and although the republic was then at war with Spain, more than one superb hidalgo might be seen, wrapped in his national gravity as in a mantle, and affecting a total disregard of the blunt or hostile observations made within his hearing by sailors of the Venetian navy, or by individuals smart-

ing under the loss of ships and cargoes captured by Spanish galleys.

Scattered here and there amongst the crowd, Antonio's searching eye soon remarked a number of men, to whom, accustomed as he was to analyse the heterogeneous composition of a Venetian mob, he was yet at a loss to assign any distinct class or country. Their sunburnt and strongly marked features were partially hidden by the folds of ample cloaks, in which they kept themselves closely muffled; and it appeared to Antonio, that in their selection of places they were more anxious to escape observation than to obtain a good view of the approaching fight. In the dark patches of shadow thrown by the overhanging balconies, in the recesses of deep and gloomy portals, or peering out from the entrance of some narrow and tortuous alley, these men were grouped, silent, scowling, and alone, and apparently known to none of the surrounding crowd. But suspicious as were the appearance and deportment of the persons in question, Antonio's thoughts were too much engrossed by another and far more interesting subject, to accord them much attention. He nourished the hope of discovering amongst the multitude assembled around him, the mysterious being who had taken so strong a hold on his imagination. Vainly, however, did he scan every balcony and window, and strain his eyes to distinguish the faces of the more distant of the assembled dames. More than once the flutter of a

white robe, or a momentarily fancied resemblance of figure, made his heart beat high with expectation, until a second glance destroyed his hopes; and the turning of a head or drawing aside of a veil disclosed the blooming features of some youthful beauty, to which, in his then state of mind, the wrinkled and unearthly visage of the *incognita* would have been infinitely preferable.

While the young painter was thus fluctuating between hope and disappointment, several lads with naked arms, or but slightly encumbered with clothing, were giving the spectators a foretaste of the approaching conflict; and, encouraged by the applause which was liberally vouchsafed them, making violent efforts to drive one another off the bridge. At times the spirit of partisanship would induce some of the bystanders to come to the aid of those who seemed likely to be defeated—an interference that was repressed by the ædiles stationed at either end of the bridge, who did their utmost to enforce the laws of this popular tournament. Notwithstanding their efforts, however, the *mostra* or *duello* between two persons, by which the combat should begin, was often converted into the *frotta* or *mêlée*, in which all pressed forward without order. The first advantage was held to be—for one of the combatants to draw blood, if it were only a single drop, from the nose or mouth of his opponent. Loud applause rewarded the skill and vigour of him who succeeded in throwing his adver-

sary into the canal; but the clamour became deafening when a champion was found who maintained his station in the centre of the bridge, without any of the opposite party venturing to attack him. This feat won the highest honour that could be obtained; and he who achieved it retired from his post amid the waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and the enthusiastic cheers of the gratified spectators.

At length the bell of the Campanile announced that Mass was over, and presently, out of two opposite streets that had been purposely kept clear, the combatants emerged, pressing forward in eager haste towards the bridge; their arms naked to the shoulders, their breasts protected by leathern doublets, and their heads by closely fitting caps—their dress altogether as light as possible, and well adapted to the struggle in which they were about to engage. The loud hum of the multitude was hushed on their appearance, and the deepest silence reigned while the ædiles marshalled them to their respective places, on which they planted themselves in threatening attitudes, their broad and muscular chests expanded, their fists clenched, their feet seeming to grasp the ground on which they stood.

A loud flourish of trumpets gave the signal of the onset, and with inconceivable impetuosity the two parties threw themselves on each other. In spite, however, of the fury and violence of the shock, neither side yielded an inch of ground. The bridge was com-

pletely filled with men from end to end, and from side to side; there was no parapet or barrier of any kind to prevent the combatants from pushing one another into the canal; yet so equally balanced was the strength of the two parties, that after nearly half an hour's struggle very few men had been thrown from the bridge, and not the smallest advantage had been obtained either by Castellani or Nicolotti. Those in the rear, who had as yet done nothing but push the others forward, now came to the front, and the combat was renewed with fresh vigour, but for a long time without any result. Again and again were the combatants changed; but it was past noon before Antonio, whose thoughts had been gradually diverted from the *incognita* by the struggle that was going on, perceived symptoms of weariness amongst those indefatigable athletes. Here and there a knee was seen to bend, or a muscular form to sink, under some well-directed blow, or before a sudden rush of the opposite party. First one, then another of the combatants was hurled from the bridge into the canal—an immersion that, dripping with perspiration as they were, not unfrequently caused death or severe illness. Nevertheless the fury of the fight seemed rather to increase than diminish. So long as only a man here and there fell into the water, they were dragged out by their friends; and the spectators even seemed to feel pity and sympathy for the unfortunates, as they saw them carried along, some covered with blood,

others paralysed by the sudden cold, with faces pale as death and limbs stiff and rigid. But as the fury and violence of the combatants augmented, the bystanders forgot every other feeling in the excitement of the fight, about the result of which they seemed as anxious as those who were actively engaged in it. Even women might be seen encouraging those who were driven back, and urging them once more to the charge; applauding and cheering them on when they advanced, and assailing those who hung back with vehement reproaches. The uproar and shouting, shrieks and yells, exceeded anything that could be imagined. The partisans had got completely mixed together; and, instead of the struggle being confined to the foremost ranks of the contending parties, the whole bridge was now one coil of raging combatants. Men fell into the canal by scores, but no one thought of rendering them any assistance. Their places were immediately filled up, and the fight lost none of its fury from their absence.

Evening was now approaching, and the combat was more violent than it had yet been, or than it had for years been known to be, when Antonio saw the cloaked and mysterious individuals who had already attracted his attention emerge from their lurking-places, and disappear in different directions. Presently he thought he observed some of them on the bridge mingling with the combatants, whose blind rage prevented them from noticing the intrusion.

Wherever they passed, there did the fight augment in obstinacy and fury. Suddenly there was a violent rush upon the bridge, a frightful outcry, and a clash of steel. At the same moment the blades of several swords and daggers were seen crossed and glittering upon the bridge, without its being possible for any one to divine whence the weapons came. The spectators, seized with a panic fear, fled in every direction, and sprang in crowds from the quays to seek shelter under the awnings of the gondolas covering the canal. In vain did the gondoliers resist the intrusion of the fugitives: all considerations of rank and property were lost sight of in the terror of the moment, and some of the boats sank under the weight of the multitudes that poured into them. In their haste to get away, the gondolas impeded each other, and became wedged together in the canal; and amidst the screams of the ladies and angry exclamations of the men, the gondoliers laid down their oars and began to dispute the precedence with blows. Meanwhile the people on the roofs of the houses, believing themselves in safety, espoused different sides, and threw stones and bricks at each other, and at those standing below. In an incredibly short time houses were entirely unroofed, and a perfect storm of tiles rained upon the quays and streets. Those who had first fled, when they attained what appeared a safe distance, halted to look on, and thus prevented others from getting away. Antonio was amongst the num-

ber whose escape was thus impeded. His gondolier lay at the bottom of the boat, stunned by a blow from a stone; he himself was bruised and wounded by the missiles that fell in all directions.

The tumult was at its height when suddenly a sound was heard that had a truly magical effect upon the rioters, for such they might now be termed. The alarm-bell of St Mark's rang out its awful peal. In an instant the yells of defiance were hushed; the arm that was already drawn back to deal a blow fell harmless by its owner's side, the storm of missiles ceased, the contending factions parted, and left the combat undecided. The habit of obedience and the intimation of some danger to the city, stilled in an instant the rage of party feeling, and combatants and spectators alike hurried away in the direction of St Mark's place, the usual point of rendezvous on such occasions.

Jacopo had now recovered his senses, and Antonio's gondola was one of the first which reached the square in front of the cathedral. Thence the young painter at once discovered the cause of the alarm. Smoke and flame were issuing from some buildings on the opposite island of San Giorgio Maggiore, where the greater part of the merchants' warehouses were situated. Thither the crowd of gondolas now steered, and Antonio found himself carried along with the stream. But although the fire was already beginning to subside before the prompt measures

taken to subdue it, the alarm-bell kept clanging on; and Antonio soon perceived that there must be some other point of danger to which it was intended to turn the attention of the people. Gazing about for some indication of its source, he saw several gondolas hurrying towards the Grand Canal, on which most of the palaces of the nobles were situated, and he ordered Jacopo to steer in the same direction.

On reaching the *palazzo* of the Malipieri family, a strange scene presented itself to him. The open space between the side of the palace and the adjacent church of San Samuele was crowded with men engaged in a furious and sanguinary conflict. At one of the windows of the palace, a tall man in a flowing white robe, with a naked sabre in one hand and a musquetoon in the other, which, from the smoke still issuing from its muzzle, had apparently just been discharged, stood defending himself desperately against a band of fierce and bearded ruffians, who swarmed up a rope-ladder fixed below the window. The person making so gallant a defence was the Senator Malipiero; the assailants were Uzcoques from the fortress of Segna.

The arrival of the Proveditore Marcello at Gradiska, and his subsequent recognition of his jewels at the ball, having destroyed Strasolda's hopes of obtaining her father's liberation through the intervention of the archducal counsellors, the high-spirited maiden resolved to execute a plan she had herself de-

vised, and which, although in the highest degree rash and hazardous, might still succeed if favoured by circumstances and conducted with skill and decision. This was to seize upon the person of a Venetian of note, in order to exchange him for the Uzcoques then languishing in the dungeons of the republic.

The Venetians were not yet aware that the much-dreaded *voivode* Dansowich was among their prisoners. The time chosen by the Uzcoques for their expeditions and surprises was usually the night; and this, added to the custom of mask-wearing, was the cause that the features of Dansowich were unknown to his captors. Nevertheless the striking countenance and lofty bearing of the chieftain, and of one or two of those who were taken prisoners with him, raised suspicions that they were persons of mark —suspicions which were not dissipated by their reiterated denial of being any thing more than common Uzcoques. It was this doubt which saved their lives; for their captors, instead of hanging them at once at the yard-arm of the galleys, which was the usual manner of disposing of Segnarese prisoners, took them to Venice, and placed them at the disposal of the senate. All subsequent threats and promises proved ineffectual to extort from the pirates an acknowledgment of superior rank; and the Venetian authorities would perhaps have ended in believing the account they gave of themselves, had not the urgent applications made by the Austrian envoy and the

Capitano of Fiume, for the release of the Uzcoques, given their suspicions new strength. The object of the Venetians was, if they could ascertain that there was a chief among the prisoners, to obtain from him, by torture or otherwise, confessions which might enable them to prove to the archduke the encouragement afforded by his counsellors to the piracies of the Segnarese. They accordingly delayed, by every possible pretext, giving an answer to the archducal ambassador, doing their utmost meanwhile to find out the real quality of the prisoners. This Strasolda was most anxious they should not discover; and her anxiety was scarcely less to prevent the captivity of their leader from becoming known among the pirates themselves. His daughter's entreaties, and his own better nature, had frequently caused Dansowich to check his followers in the atrocities they were too apt to commit. In consequence of this interference, Strasolda suspected her father to be more feared than liked by Jurissa Caiduch and some others of the inferior *woivodes* or officers; and she apprehended that, if she confided her plan to them, they would be more likely to thwart than to aid her in it. The crews of the two boats which had been engaged in the skirmish with the Venetian galleys when Dansowich was captured, and the men composing the garrison of the castle on the evening of that fatal occurrence, were therefore all whose assistance she could reckon upon. Some of these were her rel-

atives, and the others tried and trusty adherents. They alone knew of their leader's captivity, his absence having been accounted for to the mass of Uzcoques dwelling in the town of Segna, by a pretended journey to Gradiska; and being too few in number to attack a Venetian galley, the sole plan that seemed to offer a chance of success to this handful of faithful followers, was the hazardous one devised by Strasolda. Of this, they did not hesitate to attempt the execution.

With the utmost cunning and audacity did the Uzcoques enter Venice on the day appointed for the Battle of the Bridge, singly, and by twos and threes, variously disguised, and mingled with the country people and inhabitants of the islands who were hastening to the festival. Watching their opportunity when the fight was at the fiercest, one party mixed with the combatants, exciting and urging them on, and doing all in their power to increase the confusion; others set fire to the warehouses on the island of San Giorgio, in order to draw the public attention in that direction; while the third and most numerous division, favoured by the deepening twilight and the deserted state of that part of the city, succeeded in fixing a rope-ladder to the window of the Malipieri palace, the chief of which noble house was, as they had previously ascertained, lying sick in bed in a side-chamber, attended only by a few domestics.

But there were two things which Strasolda and the

Uzcoques had forgotten to include in their calculations. These were, first, the slavish obedience of the Venetian populace to the call of their superiors—an obedience to which they were accustomed to sacrifice every feeling and passion; secondly, the Argus eyes and omnipresent vigilance of the Secret Tribunal. Scarcely was the ladder applied, when the first gush of flame from the warehouses brought a deafening peal from the alarm-bell; and at the same moment, the masked and armed familiars of the Venetian police, rising as it seemed out of the very earth, surrounded the ladder, and a fierce conflict began. Even the watchfulness and precautions of the Inquisition, however, were to a certain extent overmatched by Uzcoque cunning and foresight. Had it not been necessary to ring the alarm-bell on account of the fire, the police, who were far the most numerous, and who each moment received an accession to their numbers, could scarcely have failed to capture some of their opponents, and thus have ascertained to a certainty what the promoters and the object of this audacious attempt really were. But before they could accomplish this, the small piazza where the conflict was going on was thronged with the populace, half intoxicated with the excitement of the scarcely less serious fight they had been witnessing and sharing in. In the crush and confusion that ensued, familiars and Uzcoques were separated; and the latter, mingling with the crowd, and no longer dis-

tinguishable from the cloaked and masked figures that surrounded them, easily succeeded in effecting their escape.

When Antonio, who was pushed hither and thither by the mob, was able to extricate himself sufficiently to get another view of the window, the invalid nobleman, delivered from his assailants, had retired into his apartment, while the ladder, now deserted by the Uzcoques, had been cut and thrown down. Desirous of escaping from this scene of confusion, the young painter was making his way towards the quay, close to which his gondola was waiting, when his heart suddenly leaped within him at the sight of a muffled figure that passed near him, and in which he thought he recognised the mysterious old woman who had of late occupied so much of his thoughts. She was followed by a number of the rabble, who pressed upon her with oaths and curses, asserting that she was one of the party which had attacked the palace of the Malipieri.

"I saw her holding the ladder," exclaimed one fellow.

"Nay, she was climbing up it herself," cried a second.

"Strike the foul witch dead!" shouted a score of voices.

The old woman's life was in the greatest peril, when a strange and unaccountable, but at the same time irresistible impulse, moved Antonio to go to her

rescue. He was forcing his way through the crowd with this intention, when the object of the popular fury turned her head towards him. Her veil was for a moment partially drawn aside, affording a glimpse of her features in profile; and Antonio, still the slave of his diseased imagination, fancied that her yellow shrivelled features had been metamorphosed into a countenance of regular beauty; such a countenance, in short, as befitted the graceful and symmetrical form to which it belonged. Confused and bewildered, the naturally weak and undecided youth stood deliberating and uncertain whether he should attempt the rescue, which would have been by no means difficult to accomplish by the display of a little boldness and promptitude. Whilst he was thus hesitating, there suddenly broke through the crowd a young man, attired like himself in a black dress, and holding a naked rapier in his hand. The new-comer had probably lost his mask in the tumult and confusion, for his features were uncovered, and Antonio saw, to his inexpressible consternation and astonishment, that they were the exact counterpart of his own. Before he could recover from this new shock, the stranger, by the aid of his fierce and determined demeanour, and the rapid play of his weapon, had made his way to the mysterious old woman, whose back was turned towards him, and seizing her round the waist he again forced a passage through the throng to the nearest gondola, which happened to be that of the

young painter. The crowd pressed after him, and Antonio was hurried along with it to the edge of the quay. But at the very moment that, to avoid being pushed into the water by the throng, he sprang into one end of his gondola, he saw the stranger, who had just entered it at the other, gaze with a look of disgust and dismay on the features of her he had rescued, and then with a cry of horror leap into another boat, which immediately rowed rapidly away. At the same instant Jacopo, by a strong sweep of the oar, spun the gondola round, and shot into a narrow canal, which soon led them out of sight and sound of the scene of confusion they had just left.

These various events had succeeded each other so rapidly, that Antonio could hardly credit his senses when he found himself in this strange manner the deliverer of the mysterious being who now sat under the awning of his gondola, her frightful countenance, unveiled in the struggle and no longer seen through the beautifying prism of the young artist's imagination, again displaying the yellow and wrinkled skin, and the deep-set glittering eyes, which now seemed fixed upon him with an expression of love and gratitude that froze his blood. With a shuddering sensation he retreated to the stern of the boat, where Jacopo stood pale and trembling, crossing himself without a moment's intermission.

"Are you mad, signore," whispered the gondolier, "to risk your life in behalf of such a frightful witch?

Never did I see you so ready with your rapier, flashing it in people's eyes as though it had been one of your painting brushes."

"By Heaven, Jacopo," answered Antonio, "that was not I——"

"The saints protect us!" interrupted the gondolier. "You are assuredly bewitched, or have lost your senses, signore. To think of your thus denying your own noble daring! Do, for the blessed Virgin's sake, let us jump out upon the next landing-place, and leave the gondola to the sorceress who has bewitched you. Holy mother! she is coming this way!"

A prey to the strangest and most contradictory emotions, Antonio hastily advanced to meet the mysterious being, whom he could not help regarding with superstitious awe, though he at the same time felt himself drawn towards her by a fascination, against which he found it was in vain to contend. The features of the unknown were again shrouded carefully in her veil, but her black and brilliant eyes glittered through it like nebulous stars.

"To the house of the Capitano of Fiume," whispered she to Antonio, and then retreated, as if anxious to avoid further conversation, into the interior of the gondola.

In the district of Castello, through which Antonio and his strange companion were now passing, the canals and quays were deserted, and not a sound was

heard except the distant hum of the multitude assembled in the quarter of St Mark's. Without exciting suspicion or attracting observation, they reached the Rialto and the Grand Canal, and the gondola stopped at a landing-place opposite the church of San Moyses.

As the young painter assisted his mysterious charge out of the boat, a gentle pressure from the warm soft hand which for a moment rested upon his, quickened every pulse in his frame; and long after the enigmatical being had disappeared behind the angle of a palace, he stood gazing, like one entranced, at the spot where he had last seen her imposing and graceful figure. The approach of Jacopo, still crossing himself, and calling upon all the saints for protection against the snares of the evil one, roused the perplexed youth from his reverie; and, stepping into the gondola, he was soon gliding rapidly over the canals in the direction of his father's palace.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PICTURE.

The gondola of the young painter, gliding rapidly and silently over the still waters of the canals, was passing a turn leading to the Giudecca, when it suddenly occurred to Antonio that he would seek his old

master, and, after confessing his disobedience, relate to him the events of the day, and make him the confidant of his troubles and perplexities. A word to Jacopo changed the direction of the gondola, and they entered the Grand Canal, on which Contarini's dwelling was situated.

The brief twilight of Italy had passed, and it was now completely night, dark and starless, which made more startling the sudden appearance of several blazing torches, borne by masked and hooded figures attired in black, who struck loud and repeated blows on the gates of the Palazzo Contarini.

"Antonio Marcello! We seek Antonio Marcello!" exclaimed a deep and hollow voice.

It would be necessary to be a Venetian, and to have lived in those days, fully to comprehend the feeling of horror which caused Antonio's blood to run cold, and the sweat to stand in beads upon his forehead, when he heard his name uttered by the familiars of the State Inquisition. Frightful dungeons, masked judges, halls hung with black, the block and the gleaming axe, the rack and its blood-stained attendants, the whole grim paraphernalia of the Secret Tribunal, passed like the scenes of a phantasmagoria before the mental vision of the young painter. He at once conjectured the cause for which they were seeking him. He had doubtless been taken for the youth who, by his energy and promptitude, had rescued the mysterious old woman from the mob, and who bore so striking

and unaccountable resemblance to himself; and it must be on suspicion of his being connected with the attack on the Malipieri palace, that the ministers of justice were hunting him out. Nor did he see how he should be able to convince his judges of his innocence. The tale he had to tell, although the truth, was still too marvellous and improbable to obtain credence, and would be more likely to draw upon him severe punishment, or perhaps the torture, with the view of inducing him to confess its falsehood. Bewildered by his terror, Antonio sat trembling, and utterly incapable of deciding as to the course he should adopt, when the trusty gondolier again came to his rescue.

"*Cospetto!* signor!" he exclaimed, "have you lost your senses, that you run thus into the very jaws of those devil's messengers? To one like myself flight would certainly avail little; but, with a Proveditore for your father, you may arrange matters if you only take time before you become their prisoner. Quick, then, to the *palazzo!* Don't you see old Contarini's head stuck out of his window? He is telling them you are not there. They have doubtless been to your father's palace, and will not be likely to return thither at present."

While the faithful fellow's tongue was thus wagging, his arms were not idle. Intimately acquainted, as became his calling, with the numerous windings and intricacies of the Venetian canals, he threaded

them with unhesitating confidence; and, favoured by the darkness of the night, succeeded in getting Antonio unobserved through a back entrance of his father's palace.

The first impulse of the terrified youth on finding himself thus in at least temporary security, was to destroy the picture of the mysterious old woman, which, if found by the agents of the Inquisition, might bear false but fatal witness against him. With pallid cheek, and still trembling with alarm, he was hurrying to his chamber to execute his intention, when he encountered his father, who advanced to meet him, and grasping his arm, fixed upon him for some moments his stern and searching gaze.

"The picture, father!" exclaimed the terror-stricken Antonio. "For the love of Heaven, stay me not! Let me destroy that fatal picture!"

Regardless of his son's agitation and terror, the Proveditore half led, half forced him to a seat in a part of the room, when the red blaze from the larch logs that were crackling on the hearth, lit up the young man's features.

"What means this, Antonio?" he said; "what has befallen during my absence at Gradiska? The familiars of the Inquisition have been seeking you here—you, the last person whose name I should expect to hear in such mouths. Alarm me it did not; for well I know that you are too scant of energy and

settled purpose to be mixed up in conspiracies against the State."

Antonio was still too much preoccupied by his terror to understand, or at any rate to heed, the severity of his father's remark. Collecting his scattered thoughts, he proceeded to narrate all that had occurred to him, not only on that day, but since his first meeting with the *incognita* near the church of San Moyses, on the very same spot whither he had conveyed her in his gondola but a short hour ago.

"Let me destroy the painting, father!" he concluded; "it may be found, and used as testimony against me."

The Proveditore had listened with a smile, that was at once contemptuous and sorrowful, to his son's narrative, and to the confession of his weakness, and disobedience to the injunctions of his aged teacher. When he had finished speaking, there was a minute's silence, broken at last by the elder Marcello.

"I have long been convinced," he said, "that Contarini would never succeed in making of you a painter fit to rank with those old and illustrious masters of whom Venice is so justly proud. But I had not thought so poorly of you, Antonio, as to believe that you would want courage to defend an object, for the attainment of which you scrupled not to disobey your venerable instructor. What the kind entreaties and remonstrances of Contarini could not induce you to abandon, you are ready to annihilate on the very first

symptom of danger. Oh, Venice!" exclaimed the Proveditore, his fine countenance assuming an expression of extreme bitterness, as he gazed mournfully at the portraits of his ancestors, including more than one Doge, which were suspended round the walls of the apartment—"Venice! thou art indeed degenerate, when peril so remote can blanch the cheek of thy patrician youth."

He strode twice up and down the hall, then returning to his son, bade him fetch the picture which he was so desirous of destroying. Antonio, downcast and abashed by these reproaches, which, however, were insufficient to awaken nobler aspirations in his weak and irresolute nature, hurried to his chamber, and presently returned with a roll of canvas in his hand, which he unfolded and spread before the Proveditore—then, dreading to encounter his father's ridicule, he shrunk back out of the firelight. But the effect produced upon Marcello by the portrait of the old woman was very different from that anticipated by his son. Scarcely had he cast his eyes upon the unearthly visage, when he started back with an exclamation of horror and astonishment.

"By all the saints, Antonio," cried he in an altered voice, "that is a fearful portrait! Alas, poor wretch! thou art long since in thy grave," continued he, addressing the picture, and with looks and tones strangely at variance with his usually stern and imperturbable deportment. "The worms have preyed

on thee, and thou art as dust and ashes. Why, then, dost thou rise from the dead to fright me with that ghastly visage?"

"Is the face known to you, father?" the astonished Antonio ventured to exclaim.

"Known to me! Ay, too well! That wrinkled skin, that unearthly complexion, those deep-set eyes glowing like burning coals. Just so did she glare upon me as she swung from the tree, the blood driven into her features by the agonising pressure of the halter. 'Tis the very look that has haunted me for years, and caused me many bitter moments of remorse; though, God knows, the deed was lawful and justifiable, done in the execution of my duty to the republic. And yet she lives," he continued musingly. "How could she have been saved? True, she had not been hanging long when we left the place. Some of her people, doubtless, were concealed hard by, and cut her down ere life had entirely fled. But, ha! 'tis a clue this to the perpetrators of to-day's outrage, for she was with them. Uzcoques, then, they must have been! Said you not, Antonio, that she came from the house of the Capitano when first you saw her, and that to-day you left her there?"

"At her own special desire, father," replied Antonio.

"Then is the chain of evidence almost complete," continued the Proveditore. "It must have been herself. And now—this attack on the Malipieri palace.

What was its object? A hostage?—Ay, I see it all, and our prisoner is none other than Dansowich himself. But we must have proof of that from his own confession; and this portrait may help to extort it."

Whilst uttering these broken sentences, which were totally incomprehensible to the bewildered Antonio, the Proveditore had donned his mantle, and placed his plumed cap upon his head.

"No, Antonio," said he, "we will not destroy this picture, hideous though it be. It may prove the means of rendering weighty service to the republic."

And with these words, inexplicable to his son, the Proveditore left the apartment; and, taking with him the mysterious portrait, hastened to the prison where the Uzcoque leader was immured.

The pirate chief was a man of large and athletic frame, of strong feelings, and great intellectual capabilities. His brow was large, open, and commanding; his countenance, bronzed with long exposure to the elements, and scarred with wounds, was repulsive, but by no means ignoble; his hair and beard had long been silvered over by time and calamity; but his vast bodily strength was unimpaired, and when roused into furious resentment, his manly chest emitted a volume of sound that awed every listener. Upon a larger stage, and under circumstances more favourable to the fair development of his natural powers and dispositions, the pirate Dansowich would have become one of the most distinguished and ad-

mirable men of his time. Placed by the accident of birth upon the frontiers of Christian Europe, and cherishing from early youth a belief that the highest interests of the human race were involved in the struggle between the Crescent and the Cross, he had embraced the glorious cause with that enthusiastic and fiery zeal which raises men into heroes and martyrs. Too soon, however, were these lofty aspirations checked and blighted by the anti-Christian policy of trading Venice, the bad faith of Austria towards the Uzcoque race, and the extortions of her counsellors. Cursing, in the bitterness of his heart, not only Turks, Austrians, and Venetians, but all mankind, he no longer opposed the piratical tendencies of his neglected people, and eventually headed many of their marauding expeditions.

It was nearly midnight when Dansowich was awakened from a deep but troubled slumber by a grating noise at the door of his dungeon. Anxiety of mind, and still more, the effect of confinement in an impure and stifling atmosphere, upon one accustomed to the breezes of the Adriatic and the free air of the mountains, had impaired his health, and his sleep was broken by harassing and painful dreams. In that from which he now awoke, with the sweat of anguish on his brow, he had fancied himself before the tribunal of the Inquisition. The rack was shown to him, and they bade him choose between confession and torture. He then thought he heard his name

repeated several times in tones deep and sepulchral. Starting up in alarm, he saw the door of his prison open, and give admittance to a man muffled in a black cloak, who walked up to the foot of his bed of damp straw, and threw the rays of a dark lantern full into his dazzled eyes.

The traces of recent and strong emotion, visible at that moment on the pirate's countenance, did not escape the Proveditore, who attributed them, and rightly, to an artifice he had practised. Previously to entering the dungeon, he had caused the name of Nicolo Dansowich to be repeated several times in a deep hollow voice. Aware of the superstitious credulity of the Uzcoques, the wily Venetian had devised this stratagem as one likely to produce a startling effect upon the prisoner, and to forward the end he proposed to obtain by his visit. He now seated himself upon a wooden bench, the only piece of furniture in the dungeon, and addressed the captive in a mild and conciliating tone.

"You should keep better watch over your dreams," said he, "if you wish our tribunals to remain in ignorance of your secrets."

"My dreams!" repeated the Uzcoque, somewhat startled by the ominous coincidence between Marcello's words and the visions that had broken his slumber.

"Ay, friend, your dreams! The jailers are watchful, and little passes in these prisons without coming

to their knowledge. More than once have they heard you revealing in your sleep that which, during your waking hours, you so strenuously deny.—'Enough! Enough!' you cried. 'I will confess all. I am Nicolo Dansowich.'"

While Marcello was speaking, the old Uzcoque had had time to collect his thoughts, and call to mind the numerous snares and devices by which the Venetian tribunals obtained confessions from their prisoners. With an intuitive keenness of perception, he in a moment saw through the Proveditore's stratagem, and resolved to defeat it. A contemptuous smile played over his features, and shaking his head incredulously, he answered the Venetian—

"The watchful jailers you speak of have doubtless been cheering their vigils with the wine-flask," said he. "Their draughts must have been deep, to make them hear that which was never spoken."

"Subterfuge will avail you nothing," replied Marcello. "Your sleeping confessions, although you may now wish to retract them, are yet sufficient grounds for the tribunal to go upon, and the most excruciating tortures will be used, if needful, to procure their waking confirmation. Reflect, Dansowich," continued the Proveditore in a persuasive and gentle tone, "on the position in which you now find yourself. Your life is forfeited; and, if you persist in your denials, you will never leave this dungeon but for the rack or scaffold. On the other hand, the senate respects you

as a brave and honourable, although misguided man, and would gladly see you turn from the error of your ways. Now is the time to ensure yourself a tranquil and respected old age. Hearken to the proposals I am empowered to make you. The Signoria offers you life, freedom, and a captainship in the island of Candia, on the sole condition, on your part, of disclosing the intrigues and perfidy of the council at Gradiska, and furnishing us, as you are assuredly able to do, with documents by which we may prove to the archduke the treachery of his ministers. Again, I say—Reflect! or rather hesitate not, but decide at once between a prosperous and honourable life, and a death of degradation and anguish."

Neither the threats nor the temptations held out by the Proveditore seemed to have the smallest effect upon the Uzcoque.

"You are mistaken," replied he, calmly. "I am not Dansowich, nor have I any knowledge of the intrigues at Gradiska. I could not therefore, if I wished it, buy my life by the treachery demanded of me; and if the *woivodes* of Segna think as I do, they will let themselves be hewn in pieces before they do the bidding of your senators, or concede aught to the wishes of false and crafty Venice."

"You are a brave man, Dansowich!" resumed the Proveditore, who saw the necessity of changing his tactics. "You care little for the dangers and sufferings of this world. But yet—pause and reflect. Your

hair is silvered by time, and even should you escape your present peril, you will still, ere many years are past, have to render an account to a higher tribunal than ours. By an upright course you might atone for the crimes of your youth and manhood, and become the chosen instrument of Heaven to deliver your fellow-Christians from a cruel scourge and sore infliction."

"And who has brought the scourge upon you?" demanded the old man in a raised voice, measuring the Proveditore with a stern and contemptuous look. "Is it our fault that, whilst we were striving to keep the Turk from the door of Christendom, you sought every means of thwarting our efforts by forming treaties with the infidel? You do well to remind me that my head is grey. I was still a youth when the name of Uzcoque was a title of honour as it is now a term of reproach—when my people were looked upon as heroes, by whose valour the Cross was exalted and the Crescent bowed down to the dust. Those were the days when, on the ruins of Spalatro, we swore to live like eagles, amidst barren cliffs and naked rocks, the better to harass the heathen—the days when the power of the Moslem quailed and fled before us. And had not your sordid Venetian traders stepped in, courting the infidel for love of gain, the Cross would still be worshipped on all the shores of the Adriatic, and the Uzcoques would still combat for honour and victory instead of revenge and plunder. But your

hand has ever been against us. Your long galleys were ever ready to sink our barks or blockade our coast; and the fate of robbers and murderers awaited our people if they had the mishap to fall into your hands. You reduced us at last to despair. Each valiant deed performed against the Turk was recompensed by you with new persecutions, till at last you converted into deadly enemies those who would willingly have been your friends and fast allies. Thank yourselves, then, for the foe you have raised up. Your own cowardice and greed have engendered the hydra which now preys upon your heart's blood."

The Proveditore remarked with satisfaction, not unmingled with surprise, that the old pirate, who had hitherto replied to all interrogatories with a degree of cold reserve and cunning which had baffled his examiners, was becoming visibly excited, and losing his power of self-control. This was favourable to the meditated stratagem of the Venetian, who now, in pursuance of the scheme he had combined, gave the conversation another direction.

"I am willing to acknowledge," said he, "that the republic has at times dealt somewhat hardly with your people. But which is in fact the worst foe, he who openly attacks you, or he who makes you his tool to sow discord amongst Christians, and to excite the Turks against Venice, while under pretence of protection he squeezes from you the booty obtained at the price of your blood?"

"And who does that?" demanded the Uzcoque.

"Who! Need you ask the question? What do you give for the shelter you receive from Austria? At what price do you inhabit the town and castle of Segna?"

"At none that I am aware of," replied Dansowich fiercely. "We dwell there in virtue of our compact with the emperor, as soldiers of the archduke, bound to defend the post confided to us against the aggressions of the infidel. As soldiers we have our pay, as mariners we have our lawful booty."

"Pay and booty!" repeated the Proveditore scornfully. "Whence comes, then, your manifest misery and poverty? Whence comes it that you turn robbers, if in the pay of Austria? No, Dansowich, you will not deceive us by such flimsy pretexts! Your gains, lawful and unlawful, are wrested from you by the archducal counsellors, in whose hands you are mere puppets. 'Twas they who prompted you to tell the Turks that you were in league with Venice; that the republic encouraged your misdeeds, and shared the profits of your aggressions on the subjects of the Porte. They it was who caused the documents to be prepared, with forged seals and signatures of the illustrious Signoria, which were to serve as proofs of your lying assertions. Deny this, if you can."

The beard and moustache of the old Uzcoque appeared to curl and bristle with fury at the insulting imputations of the Proveditore. For a moment he seemed about to fly at his interlocutor; his fingers

clutched and tore the straw upon which he was sitting; and his fetters clanked as his whole frame shook with rage. After a brief pause, and by a strong effort, he restrained himself, and replied calmly to the taunting accusation of the Venetian.

"Why go so far," said he, "to seek for motives that may be found nearer home? You seem to have forgotten how many times the archduke has compelled us to make restitution of booty wrested from Venetian subjects. You forget, too, that it was in consequence of your complaints he sent the cruel Rabbata to control us — Rabbata whom we slew in our wrath, for we are freemen, and brook no tyranny. If we are poor individually, it is because we yield up our booty into the hands of our *woivodes*, to be used for the common good of seven hundred families. No, signor! if the republic has to complain of us, let her remember the provocations received at her hands, the persecutions which converted a band of heroes into a pirate horde, and which changed our holy zeal against the enemies of the Cross into remorseless hatred of all mankind. As to the forged seals and signatures you talk of, and the deceptions practised on the Turks, if such there were, they were the self-willed act of our *woivodes*, and in no way instigated by Austria."

"Thou liest, Dansowich!" said the Proveditore sternly. "Did you not proclaim and swear in the public market-place of the Austrian town of Segna,

that you were the friends and allies of Venice? This you would never have dared to do, but with the approval and connivance of the archducal government."

The eyes of the pirate sparkled with a strange and significant gleam as the Proveditore recalled the circumstance to his recollection.

"Know ye not," said he with a grim smile, "whom ye have to thank for that good office? 'Twas Dansowich himself, who thereby but half fulfilled his vow of vengeance against the republic. And when did it occur?" he continued with rising fury. "Was it not shortly after the day in which that heartless villain, the Proveditore Marcello, captured the *woivode's* wife, and hung her, unoffending and defenceless, unshriven and unabsolved, upon a tree on the Dalmatian shore?"

The Uzcoque paused, overcome by the bitter memories he was calling up, and by the fury and hatred they revived in his breast. His eyes were bloodshot, and the foam stood upon his lips as he concluded. The Proveditore smiled. The favourable moment he had been waiting had arrived, the moment when he doubted not that Dansowich would betray himself. Taking Antonio's drawing from under his cloak, he suddenly unrolled and held it before the Uzcoque, in such a manner that the light of the lantern fell full upon the ghastly countenance of the old woman.

"Behold!" said he. "Does that resemble her you speak of?"

The object of the Proveditore was gained, but he had not well calculated all the consequences of his stratagem.

"Fiend of hell!" shouted Dansowich in a voice of thunder, while a sudden light seemed to burst upon him. "'Tis thou who art her murderer!" And bounding forward with a violence that at once freed him from his fetters, which fell clattering on the dungeon floor, he clutched the senator by the throat, and hurled him to the ground before the astonished Venetian had time to make the slightest resistance.

"Art thou still in being?" he muttered, while his teeth gnashed and ground together. "I thought thee long since dead. But, no! 'twas written thou shouldst die by my hand. Be it done to thee as thou didst to the wife of my bosom," continued he, while kneeling on the breast of the Proveditore, and compressing his throat in an iron gripe that threatened to prove as efficacious and nearly as speedy in its operation as the bowstring of the Turk. In vain did Marcello struggle violently to free himself from the crushing pressure of the pirate's fingers. Although a very powerful man, and in the full vigour of his strength, the disadvantage at which he had been taken prevented his being a match for the old Uzcoque, whose sinews were braced by a long life of hardship. Fortunately, however, for the Venetian, the furious shout of Dansowich had been overheard by the guards and jailers, who now rushed into

the dungeon, and rescued the half-strangled Proveditore from the grasp of his fierce antagonist.

"Do him no hurt!" exclaimed Marcello, so soon as he was able to speak, seeing that the guards were disposed to handle the Uzcoque somewhat roughly; "the secret I have won is well worth the risk. The prisoner is Dansowich, *woivode* of Segna."

The fetters which the pirate had snapped with such facility, were, upon examination, found to be filed more than half through. The instrument by which this had been effected was sought for and discovered, and the prisoner, having been doubly manacled, was again left to the solitude of his cell. After directing all imaginable vigilance to be used for the safe custody of so important a captive, the Proveditore re-entered his gondola and was conveyed back to his palace.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PIRATES.

The desperate attempt on the life of the Proveditore, and the evidence given by him as to the identity of the prisoner, had the result that may be supposed, and the old Uzcoque was put to the torture. But the ingenuity of Venetian tormentors was vainly exhausted upon him; the most unheard-of sufferings failed to extort a syllable of confession from his lips. At last,

despairing of obtaining the desired information by these means, the senate commissioned Marcello, as one well acquainted with the localities, to make a descent on the Dalmatian coast, and profiting by the consternation of the Uzcoques at the loss of their leader, to endeavour to surprise a small fort situated at some distance from Segna, and which was the abode of Dansowich. In the absence of the old pirate, it would probably be carelessly guarded and easily surprised; and it was hoped that documents would be found there, proving that which the Venetians were so anxious to establish. Another object of the expedition was to capture, if possible, the mysterious female who had been lately seen more than once in Venice, and who had taken so prominent a part in the attack on the palace of the Malipieri.

Accompanied by his son, whom for various reasons he had resolved to take with him, Marcello went on board an armed galley, and with a favouring breeze steered for the Dalmatian coast. He had little doubt of accomplishing the object of his expedition with ease and safety; for a Venetian fleet was already blockading the channel of Segna, and the archducal city of Fiume, where several of the Uzcoque barks were undergoing repairs. The blockade had been instituted in consequence of the outrageous piracies committed by the Uzcoques during the Easter festival, and was a measure frequently adopted by the republic; which, although carefully avoiding a war,

neglected no other means of enforcing their applications to the court at Gradiska for an energetic interference in the proceedings of the pirates. The inconvenience and interruption to the trade of Fiume occasioned by these blockades, usually induced the archducal government to institute a pretended investigation into the conduct of the Uzcoques, or at least to promise the Venetians some reparation—a mockery of satisfaction with which the latter, in their then state of decline and weakness, were fain to content themselves. Reckoning upon the terror inspired by the presence of the squadron now employed in the blockade, as well as upon its support, should he require it, the Proveditore made sure of success. He was doomed, however, to be cruelly disappointed in his sanguine anticipations.

When the attempt to get possession of the person of a Venetian nobleman had failed, Strasolda found it impossible to keep her father's captivity any longer a secret, and was compelled to appeal to the whole of the Uzcoques to assist her in his deliverance. Information of the *woivode's* recognition, and of the tortures he had suffered, soon reached the ears of the pirates, who were not slow to perceive that the safety, and even the existence of their tribe, were now at stake. Although well acquainted with the inflexible character of Dansowich, they trembled lest the agonies he was made to suffer should force from him a confession, which would enable the Venetians to convince

the archduke of the criminal collusion between his counsellors and the Uzcoques. This would be the signal for the withdrawal of the archducal protection from the pirates, who then, exposed to the vengeance of all whom they had plundered, must inevitably succumb in the unequal conflict that would ensue.

The imminence of the peril inspired the Uzcoques with unwonted courage and energy. Jurissa Caiduch himself, forgetting any cause of dislike he might have to Dansowich, joined heart and hand in the plans formed by the pirates for the deliverance of their leader. Every man in Segna, whether young or old, all who could wield a cimeter or clutch a knife, hastily armed themselves, and crowded into the fleet of long light skiffs in which they were wont to make their predatory excursions. Then breaking furiously through the line of Venetian ships, stationed between Veglia and the mainland, and which were totally unprepared for this sudden and daring manœuvre, they disappeared amidst the shoals and in the small creeks and inlets of the Dalmatian islands belonging to the republic, where the ponderous Venetian galleys would vainly attempt to follow them. Their object was the same which they had already attempted to carry out in Venice on the day of the Bridge Fight; namely, to seize upon some Venetian magistrate or person of importance whom they might exchange for Dansowich. Under the guidance of Jurissa Caiduch they waylaid and boarded every vessel that passed up or

down the Adriatic, especially those coming from the Ionian islands, in hope of meeting with a Venetian of rank. Nor did they pursue their researches upon the water alone. Not a night passed that one or other of the islands was not lighted up by the blaze of villages, hamlets, and villas. In the absence of Dansowich, there was no restraint upon their fury; and urged on by the bloodthirsty Jurissa, the cruelties they committed were unprecedented even in their sanguinary annals. Nor were they without hope that the barbarities they were perpetrating might induce the Venetians to restore their leader to liberty, in order that he might, as was well known to be his wont, check the excesses of his followers.

The outbreak of the pirates had been so sudden and unexpected, that the Proveditore, who sailed from Venice on the same day on which it occurred, had received no intelligence of it, and, unconscious of his peril, steered straight for the islands. One circumstance alone appeared strange to him, which was, that during the last part of his voyage he did not meet a single vessel, although the quarter of the Adriatic through which he was passing was usually crowded with shipping. But he was far from attributing this extraordinary change to its real cause.

It was afternoon when Marcello's galley came in sight of the white cliffs of Cherso, and shortly afterwards entered the channel, running between that island and Veglia. The masses of dark clouds in the

western horizon were becoming momentarily more threatening, and various signs of an approaching storm made the captain of the galley especially anxious to get, before nightfall, into the nearest harbour, which was that of Pesca, at the southern extremity of the island of Veglia. All sail was made upon the galley, and they were running rapidly down the channel, when a red light suddenly flashed over the waves in the quarter of the horizon they were approaching, and was reflected back upon the sky, now darkened with clouds and by the approach of night. Attracted by this unusual appearance, Antonio hurried to the high quarter-deck of the galley; and scarcely had he ascended it, when the fiery glow fell in a flood of rosy light upon the distant chalk cliffs. Entranced by the picturesque beauty of the scene, the young painter forgot to inquire the cause of this singular illumination, when suddenly his attention was caught by a shout from the man at the helm.

"By Heavens, 'tis a fire!" ejaculated the sailor, who had been watching the unusual appearance. "All Pesca must be in flames."

He had scarcely uttered the words when the galley rounded a projecting point of land, and the correctness of the seaman's conjecture was apparent. A thick cloud of smoke hung like a pall over the unfortunate town of Pesca. Tongues of flame darted upwards from the dense black vapour, lighting up sea and land to an immense distance.

Scarcely had Antonio's startled glance been able to take in this imposing spectacle, when the storm, which had long been impending, burst forth with tremendous violence; the wind howled furiously amongst the rigging, and the galley was tossed like a nutshell from crest to crest of the foaming waves, each moment bringing it into more dangerous proximity to the rocky shoals of that iron-bound shore. The light from the burning town showed the Venetians all the dangers of their situation; and their peril was the more imminent because the signal usually made for boats to tow large vessels through the rocks and breakers was at such a moment not likely to be observed or attended to by the people of Pesca. Nevertheless the signal was hoisted; but instead of bringing the assistance so much needed by the Venetians, it drew upon them an enemy far more formidable than the elements with which they were already contending. Boats were soon seen approaching the galley; but as they drew near it was evident they were not manned by the peaceful fishermen who usually came out to render assistance to vessels. They were crowded with wild, fierce-looking figures, who, on arriving within a short distance of the ship, set up a savage yell of defiance, and sent a deadly volley of musket-balls amongst the astounded Venetians. Before the latter had recovered from their astonishment, the light skiffs of the Uzcoques were within a few yards of the galley. Another

fatally effective volley of musketry; and then, throwing down their firearms, the pirates grasped their sabres and made violent efforts to board. But each time that they succeeded in closing, the plunging of the ponderous galley into the trough of the sea, or the rising of some huge wave, severed them from their prey, and prevented them from setting foot on the decks of the Venetian vessel. This delay was made the most of by the officers of the latter in making arrangements for defence. The Proveditore himself, a man of tried and chivalrous courage, and great experience both in land and sea warfare, lent his personal aid to the preparations, and in a few pithy and emphatic words strove to encourage the crew to a gallant resistance. But the soldiers and mariners who manned the galley had already sustained a heavy loss by the fire of the Uzcoques, and were moreover alarmed by their near approach to that perilous shore, as well as disheartened by the prospect of a contest with greatly superior numbers. Although some few took to their arms and occupied the posts assigned them by their officers, the majority seemed more disposed to tell beads and mutter prayers than to display the energy and decision which alone could rescue them from the double peril by which they were menaced. The pirates meanwhile were constantly foiled in their attempts to board by the fury of the elements, till at last, becoming maddened by repeated disappointments, they

threw off their upper garments, and fixing their long knives firmly between their teeth, dashed in crowds into the water. Familiar with that element from childhood, they skimmed over its surface with the lightness and rapidity of sea-mews, and swarmed up the sides of the galley. A vigorous defence might yet have saved the vessel; but the heroic days of Venice were long past—the race of men who had so long maintained the supremacy of the republic in all the Italian seas was now extinct. After a feeble and irresolute resistance, the Venetians threw down their arms and begged for quarter, while the Proveditore, disgusted at the cowardice of his countrymen, indignantly broke his sword, and retreating to the quarter-deck, there seated himself beside his son, and calmly awaited his fate.

Foremost among the assailants was Jurissa Caiduch, who sprang upon the deck of the galley, foaming with rage, and slaughtering all he met on his passage. The blazing town lighted up the scene, and showed him and his followers where to strike. In vain did the unfortunate crew implore quarter. None was given, and the decks of the ship soon streamed with blood, while each moment the cries of the victims became fewer and fainter.

Totally forgetting in his blind fury the object of the expedition, Jurissa stayed not his hand in quest of hostages, but rushed with uplifted knife on Marcello and his son. The latter shrieked for mercy,

while the Proveditore, unmoved by the imminence of the peril, preserved his dignity of mien, and fixed his deep stern gaze upon the pirate. Jurissa paused for an instant, staggered by the look and awed by the commanding aspect of the Venetian. Soon, however, as though indignant at his own momentary hesitation, he rushed forward with a furious shout and uplifted blade. The knife was descending, the next instant it would have entered the heart of Marcello, when an Uzcoque, recognising by the light of the conflagration the patrician garb of the Proveditore, uttered a cry of surprise, and seized the arm of his bloodthirsty leader.

"Caiduch!" exclaimed the pirate, "would you again blast our purpose? This man is a Venetian noble. His life may buy that of Dansowich."

"It is the Proveditore Marcello!" cried Antonio, eager to profit by the momentary respite.

The words of the young painter passed from mouth to mouth, and in a few seconds the whole of the Uzcoques were acquainted with the important capture that had been made. For a moment astonishment kept then tongue-tied, and then a wild shout of exultation conveyed to their companions on shore the intelligence of some joyful event.

Ropes were now thrown out to the pirate skiffs, the galley was safely towed into the harbour, and the Proveditore, his son, and the few Venetian sailors who had escaped the general slaughter, were con-

ducted to the burning town, amidst the jeers and ill-treatment of their captors. Exposed to great danger from the falling roofs and timbers of the blazing houses, they were led through the streets of Pesca, and on their way had ample opportunity of witnessing the incredible cruelties exercised by the pirates upon the inhabitants of that ill-fated town. What made these cruelties appear still more horrible, was the part taken in them by the Uzcoque women, who, as was the case at that period with most of the Sclavonian races, were all trained to the use of arms,[1] and who on this occasion swelled the ranks of the freebooters. Their ferocity exceeded, if possible, that of the men. Neither age, sex, nor station afforded any protection against these furies, who perpetrated barbarities the details of which would exceed belief.

The violence of the flames rendering it impossible to remain in the town, the Uzcoques betook themselves to the castle of a nobleman, situated on a rising ground a short distance from Pesca. On first landing, the pirates had broken into this castle and made it their headquarters. After pillaging everything of value, they had gratified their savage love of destruction by breaking and destroying what they could not

[1] The reader of German literature will call to mind the anecdote, in Jean Paul's 'Levana,' of a Moldavian woman who in one day slew seven men with her own hand, and the same evening was delivered of a child.

well carry away. In the courtyard were collected piles of furniture, pictures of price, and fragments of rich tapestry, rent by those ruthless spoilers from the walls of the apartments. With this costly fuel had the Uzcoques lit fires, at which quarters of oxen and whole sheep were now roasting.

A shout of triumph burst forth when the news of the Proveditore's capture was announced to the pirates who had remained at the castle, and they crowded round the unfortunate prisoners, overwhelming them with threats and curses. Something like silence being at length obtained, Jurissa commanded instant preparations to be made for the banquet appointed to celebrate the success of their expedition. Tables were arranged in a spacious hall of the castle, and upon them soon smoked the huge joints of meat that had been roasting at the fires, placed on the bare boards without dish or plate. Casks of wine that had been rescued from the flames of the town, or extracted from the castle cellars, were broached, or the heads knocked in, and the contents poured into jugs and flagons of every shape and size. Although the light of the conflagration, glaring red through the tall Gothic windows, lit up the hall and rendered any further illumination unnecessary, a number of torches had been fixed round the apartment, the resinous smoke of which floated in clouds over the heads of the revellers. Seating themselves upon benches, chairs, and empty casks, the Uzcoques commenced a

ravenous attack upon the coarse but abundant viands set before them.

The scene was a strange one. The brutal demeanour of the men, their bearded and savage aspect; the dishevelled blood-stained women, mingling their shrill voices with the hoarse tones of their male companions; the disordered but often picturesque garb and various weapons of the pirates; the whole seen by the light of the burning houses—more resembled an orgie of demons than an assemblage of human beings; and even the cool and resolute Proveditore felt himself shudder and turn pale as he contemplated this carnival of horrors, celebrated by wretches on whose hands the blood of their fellow-men was as yet hardly dry. Antonio sat supporting himself against the table, seeming scarcely conscious of what passed around him. Both father and son had been compelled to take their places at the board, amidst the jeers and insults of the Uzcoques.

The revel was at its height, when Jurissa suddenly started from his seat, and struck the table violently with his drinking-cup.

"Hold, Uzcoques!" he exclaimed; "we have forgotten the crowning ornament of our banquet."

He whispered something to an Uzcoque seated beside him, who left the room. While the pirates were still asking one another the meaning of Jurissa's words, the man returned, bearing before him a

trencher covered with a cloth, which he placed at the upper end of the table.

"Behold the last and best dish we can offer to our noble guests!" said Jurissa; "'twill suit, I doubt not, their dainty palates." And tearing off the cloth, he exposed to view the grizzly and distorted features of a human head.

The shout of savage exultation that burst from the pirates at this ghastly spectacle, drowned the groan of rage and grief uttered by the Proveditore, as he recognised in the pale and rigid countenance the well-known features of his friend Christophoro Veniero. That unfortunate nobleman, on his return from a voyage to the Levant, had fallen into the hands of Jurissa, who, before he was aware of the rank of his prisoner, had barbarously slain him. This had occurred not many hours before the capture of Marcello; and it was to the murder of Veniero that the Uzcoque made allusion, when he seized Jurissa's arm at the moment he was about to stab the Proveditore.

One of the pirates, a man of gigantic stature and hideous aspect, now rose from his seat, staggering with drunkenness, and forcing open the jaws of the dead, placed a piece of meat between the teeth. The wildest laughter and applause greeted this frightful pantomime, which made the blood of the Proveditore run cold.

"Infernal and bloody villains!" shouted he, un-

able to restrain his indignation, and starting to his feet as he spoke. There was a momentary pause, during which the pirates gazed at the noble Venetian, seemingly struck dumb with surprise at his temerity. Then, however, a dozen sinewy arms were extended to seize him, and a dozen daggers menaced his life. Dignified and immovable, the high-souled senator offered no resistance, but inwardly ejaculating a short prayer, awaited the death-stroke. It came not, however. Although some of the Uzcoques, in their fury and intoxication, would have immolated their valuable hostage, others, who had drunk less deeply, protested against the madness of such an act, and rushed forward to protect him. Their interference was resented, and a violent quarrel ensued. Knives were drawn, benches overturned, chairs broken up and converted into weapons; on all sides bare steel was flashing, deep oaths resounding, and missiles of various kinds flying across the tables. It would be impossible to say how long this scene of drunken violence would have lasted, or how long the Proveditore and his son would have remained unscathed amidst the storm, had not the advent of a fresh actor upon the scene stilled the tumult in a manner so sudden as to appear almost miraculous.

The new-comer was no other than the ghastly old woman who has been seen to play such an important part in this history, and who now entered the banqueting-hall with hasty step and impatient gesture.

"Uzcoques!" she exclaimed, in a shrill, clear, and emphatic voice, that rose above the clamour of the brawl. "Uzcoques! what means this savage uproar? Are you not yet sated with rapine and slaughter, that you thus fall upon and tear each other? Are ye men, or wolves and tigers? Is this the way to obtain your leader's deliverance? and will the news of this day's havoc, think you, better the position of Dansowich?"

The pirates hung their heads in silent confusion at this reproof. None dared to reply; Jurissa alone grumbled something inaudible.

"Follow me!" continued the singular woman, whose words had so extraordinary an effect on this brutal band. "Follow, every man! and stop as far as may be, the ruin you have begun."

Obedient to her voice the Uzcoques left the hall, some of them sullenly and slowly enough, but none venturing to dispute the injunction laid upon them. The old woman waited till the scene of tumult and revel was abandoned by all but Marcello and his son, and then hurrying after the pirates, led the way to the burning town. In a few minutes the two Venetians beheld, from the castle windows, the dark forms of the freebooters moving about in the firelight, as they busied themselves to extinguish the conflagration. Here and there the white robe of the mysterious old woman was discernible as she flitted from one group to another, directing their efforts, and urging them to greater exertions.

"Strange!" said the Proveditore musingly, "that so hideous and repulsive an old creature should exercise such commanding influence over these bandits."

He looked round to his son as he spoke; but Antonio, worn out by the fatigues and agitation of the day, had stretched himself upon a bench and was already in a deep sleep. The Proveditore gazed at him for a brief space, with an expression of mingled pity, regret, and paternal affection upon his countenance.

"As weak of body as infirm of purpose," he murmured. "Alas! that a name derived from old Roman ancestors should be borne by one so little qualified to do it honour! Had it pleased Heaven to preserve to me the child stolen in his infancy by the Moslem, how different would have been my position! That masculine and noble boy, so full of life and promise, would have proved a prop to my old age, and an ornament to his country. But now, alas!——"

He continued for a while to indulge in vain regrets that the course of events had not been otherwise; then turning to the window, he watched the efforts made by the pirates to extinguish the flames, until a dense cloud of smoke that overhung the town was the only sign remaining of the conflagration.

For some time the Proveditore paced up and down the hall in anxious thought upon his critical position, and the strange circumstances that had led to it. In vain did he endeavour to reconcile, what now seemed

more than ever inexplicable, the vindictive rage of Dansowich in the dungeon, and the evidence before him that the pirate's wife was still in existence. It was a riddle which he was unable to solve; and at last, despairing of success, he abandoned the attempt, and sought in slumber a temporary oblivion of the perils that surrounded him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RECOGNITION.

Upon a divan in the splendid armoury of the pacha's palace at Bosnia-Serai, the young Turk Ibrahim was seated in deep thought, the day after his return home. On the walls around him were displayed weapons and military accoutrements of every kind. Damascus sabres richly inlaid, and many with jewelled hilts, embroidered banners, golden stirrups, casques of embossed silver, burnished armour and coats of mail, were arranged in picturesque and fanciful devices. As the young Moslem gazed around him, and beheld these trophies of victories won by Turkish viziers and pachas in their wars against Austria and Venice, his martial and fearless spirit rose high, and he reproached himself with weakness and pusillanimity for having abandoned the pursuit of her he loved. Bitterly did he now regret his pre-

cipitation in leaving Venice the morning after the Battle of the Bridge, and while under the influence of the shock he had received, in beholding the hideous features of an old woman where he had expected to find the blooming countenance of Strasolda. His love for the Uzcoque maiden, as he had seen her when his captive, and again in the cavern on the coast by Segna, returned in full force. He was already planning a journey to Venice, when he was interrupted in his meditations by the noise of a horse's hoofs dashing full speed into the court of the palace. In another minute an attendant summoned him to the presence of the pacha, and there he heard the news, just received, of the wild outbreak of the Uzcoques. The Martellossi and other troops were ordered to proceed immediately to the frontier, in order to protect Turkish Dalmatia from the pirates; and Ibrahim, at his urgent request, was appointed to a command in the expedition.

With joyful alacrity did the young Turk arm and hurry to horse; and then, putting himself at the head of a troop of light cavalry, sped onwards in the direction of the country where he hoped to gain tidings of Strasolda. Having received strict orders to content himself with protecting the Turkish frontier, and above all not to infringe on archducal territory, Ibrahim, on arriving at the boundary of the pachalic, left his troop in charge of the second in command, and with a handful of men entered Venetian Dalmatia,

with the intention of obtaining information concerning the Uzcoques, and more especially concerning her he loved. He was assisted in his inquiries by the good understanding existing between Venice and the Porte; and he soon learned that, after the burning of Pesca, the pirates had suddenly ceased their excesses and returned to Segna, taking the Proveditore with them. They had not gone, however, either to the castle or the town; but fearful lest the archduke should interfere, and make them give up their illustrious prisoners, had betaken themselves to the mountains, in the numerous caverns and lurking-places of which they were able to conceal their captives. From every mouth did the eager inquirer hear praises of the female who accompanied the Uzcoques. None spoke of her but in terms of love and gratitude. As regarded her appearance accounts were at variance, some representing her as young and beautiful, while others compassionated her frightful ugliness; and more than ever perplexed by this conflicting testimony, Ibrahim pursued his march and his inquiries, still hoping by perseverance to arrive at a solution of the enigma.

While the young Turk was thus employed, the Proveditore and his son were conveyed by their captors from one place of security to another, passing one night in the depths of some ravine, the next amongst the crags and clefts of the mountains, but always moving about in the daytime, and never sleeping twice in the same place. Since the evening of the revel at Pesca

they had not again beheld the mysterious old woman, although they had more than once heard her clear and silvery voice near the place allotted to them for confinement and repose. In certain attentions and comforts, intended as alleviations of their unpleasant position, female care and thought were also visible; but all their efforts were vain to obtain a sight of the friendly being who thus hovered around them.

It was on a beautiful evening some fourteen days after their capture, that the Proveditore and his son lay upon the bank of the only river that waters the rocky vicinity of Segna, wearied by a long and rapid march. There was an unusual degree of bustle observable amongst the Uzcoques, and numerous messengers had been passing to and from the castle of Segna, which was at no great distance from the spot where they had now halted. From the various indications of some extraordinary occurrence, the two Venetians began to hope that the crisis of their fate was approaching, and that they should at last know in what manner their captors meant to dispose of them. Nor were they wrong in their expectations. Suddenly the mysterious old woman stood before them, her partially veiled features bearing their wonted hideous aspect, and her eyes, usually so brilliant, dimmed with tears.

"You are free," said she in an agitated voice to the Proveditore and his son. "Our people will escort you to Fiume in all safety, and there you will find

galleys of the republic to convey you back to Venice."

At the sight of the old woman's unearthly countenance, Antonio covered his face with his hands; the Proveditore rose from the ground deeply moved.

"Singular being!" he exclaimed, "by this mildness and mercy you punish me more effectually than by the bloodiest revenge you could have taken for my cruel treatment of you."

"You owe me no thanks," was the reply; "thank rather the Holy Virgin, who sent the youth beside you to be your guardian angel, and who delivered you into the hands of the Uzcoques at a time when they had need of a hostage. Surely it was by the special intervention of Heaven that the murderer of the wife was sent to serve as ransom for the captive husband. But the atonement has come too late, the noble Dansowich was basely ensnared into an act of violence, and his life paid the forfeit of his wrath—he died upon the rack. And now the wily counsellors at Gradiska compel us to release you."

She paused, interrupted by a flood of tears. After a short silence, broken only by her sobs, she became more composed, and the Proveditore again addressed her.

"But what," said he, "could have driven Dansowich to an act of violence, which he must have known would entail a severe punishment? Surely his wife's safety and the lapse of years might have enabled him

to forgive, if not to forget, the unsuccessful attempt upon her life."

"His wife's safety!" exclaimed the old woman. "Have the trials and fatigues of the last few days turned your brain? Alas! too surely was the rope fixed round her neck; and had you not carried off her remains how could you have possessed her portrait, and by the devilish stratagem of showing it to the bereaved husband, have driven him to the act which cost him his life?"

"Gracious Heaven! what hideous jest is this?" exclaimed Marcello. "Do I not see you living and standing before me; and think you I could ever forget your features, or the look you gave me when hanging from the tree? You were cut down and saved after our departure; and but a few weeks have elapsed since my son painted your likeness, after conveying you across the canal in his gondola."

The old woman stood for a few moments as though petrified by what she had just heard. At last she passed her hand slowly across her face, as if to convince herself of her identity.

"And she you murdered resembled *me?*" she exclaimed in a trembling voice. "It was of *me* that the portrait was taken, and by *him!*" she continued, pointing to Antonio with a gesture of horror and contempt. "*My* picture was it, that was held before Dansowich, and by *you*, the murderer of his wife? Holy Virgin!" she exclaimed, as the truth seemed to

flash upon her, "how has my faith in thee misled me! I beheld in this youth one sent by Heaven to aid me; but now I see that he was prompted by the powers of darkness to steal my portrait, and thus become the instrument of destruction to the best and noblest of our race."

"Forgive and spare us!" exclaimed Antonio, conscience-stricken as he remembered the admonitions of Contarini. "'Tis true, I *was* the instrument, but most unwittingly. How could I know so sad an end would follow?"

"'Tis not my wont to seek revenge," replied the old woman; "nor do I forget that you saved my life from the fury of the Venetians."

Antonio essayed to speak, but had not courage to correct the error into which she had been led by his strong resemblance to the gallant stranger.

"But," she continued, "'tis time you should have full proof that the features you painted were not those of the wife of Dansowich."

With these words she threw back her veil, unfastened some small hooks concealed in her abundant tresses, and took off a mask of thin and untanned lambskin, wrinkled and stained with yellow and purple streaks by exposure to sun and storm. This mask, closely fitted to features regular and prominent, and strongly resembling those of her unfortunate mother, whose large, dark, and very brilliant eyes she had also inherited, will explain the misconception of

the Proveditore as well as that of Dansowich, who had never seen his daughter in a disguise worn only at Venice or other places of peril, and while away from her father and his protection.

While the beautiful but still tearful Uzcoque maid stood thus revealed before the astonished senator and his enraptured and speechless son, the approaching footfall of a horse at full speed was heard, and in an instant there darted round the angle of a cliff the martial figure of a Turk, mounted upon a large and powerful steed, of that noble race bred in the deserts eastward of the Caspian. The tall and graceful person of the stranger was attired in a close riding-dress of scarlet cloth, from the open breast of which gleamed a light coat of mail. A twisted turban, bound with chains of glittering steel, defended and adorned his head. A crooked cimeter suspended from his belt was his only weapon. His countenance bore a striking resemblance to that of Antonio, and had the same sweet and graceful expression about the mouth and chin; but the more ample and commanding forehead, the well-opened flashing eyes, the more prominent and masculine nose, the clear, rich, olive complexion and soldierly bearing, proclaimed him to be of a widely different and higher nature. Riding close up to the side of Strasolda, he reined in his steed with a force and suddenness that threw him on his haunches; but speedily recovering his balance, the noble animal stood pawing the earth and lashing his sides with his

long tail, like some untamed and kingly creature of the desert; his veins starting out in sharp relief, his broad chest and beautiful limbs spotted with foam, and his long mane, that would have swept the ground, streaming like a banner in the sea-breeze.

For a moment the startled Strasolda gazed alternately, and in wild and mute amazement, at Antonio and the stranger; but all doubt and hesitation were dispersed in an instant by the well-remembered and impassioned tones, the martial bearing and Moslem garb of Ibrahim, whose captive she had been before she saw him in the cavern.

Leaping from his saddle and circling her slender waist with his arm, he addressed her in those accents of truth and passion which go at once to the heart—

"Heroic daughter of Dansowich! thou art the bright star of my destiny, the light of my soul! Thou must be mine! Come, then, to my heart and home! Gladden with thy love the life of Ibrahim, and he will give thee truth unfailing and love without end."

Strasolda did not long hesitate. Already prepossessed in favour of the young and noble-minded Moslem; her allegiance to the Christian powers and faith weakened by the treachery of Austria; her people degraded into robbers; a soldier's daughter, and keenly alive to the splendours of martial gallantry and glory; an orphan, too, and desolate—can it be wondered at if she surrendered, at once and for ever,

to this generous and impassioned lover all the sympathies of her affectionate nature? She spoke not; but as she leaned half-fainting on his arm, her eloquent looks said that which made Ibrahim's pulses thrill with grateful rapture. Pressing her fondly to his bosom, he placed her on the back of his faithful steed, and vaulted into the saddle. Snorting as the vapour flew from his red nostrils, and neighing with mad delight, the impatient animal threw out his iron hoofs into the air, flew round the angle of the cliff, and joined ere long a dozen mounted spearmen. Then, bending their headlong course towards the far east, in a few seconds all had disappeared.

During this scene, which passed almost with the speed of thought, the Proveditore, who was seated on a ledge of the cliff, had gazed anxiously and wildly at the youthful stranger. He knew him in an instant, and would have singled him out amidst thousands; but was so overwhelmed by a rushing tide of strong and heartrending emotions, that he could neither rise nor speak, and remained, long after the Turk had disappeared, with outstretched arms and straining eyeballs.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the bewildered Antonio, half-suspecting the truth, "who was that daring youth?"

After a pause, and in tones broken and inarticulate, his father answered—"Thy twin brother, Antonio! When a child he was stolen from me by some Turks

in Candia; and those who stole have given him their own daring and heroic nature, for they are great and rising, while Venice and her sons are falling and degenerate. O Ercole! my dear and long-lost son—seen but a moment and then lost for ever!" ejaculated the bereaved father, as, refusing all comfort, he folded his cloak over his face and wept bitterly.

NOTE.—Shortly after these events, Venice, urged at last beyond all endurance, took up arms against Austria on account of the protection afforded by the latter power to the Uzcoques. The pirate vessels were burned, Segna besieged and taken, the Uzcoques slain or dispersed. The quarrel between Austria and the republic was put an end to by the mediation of Spain shortly before the breaking out of the Thirty Years' War.

"Ces misérables," says a distinguished French writer, speaking of the Uzcoques, "fûrent bien plus criminels par la faute des puissances, que par l'instinct de leur propre nature. Les Vénétiens les aigrirent; l'église Romaine préféra de les persécuter au devoir de les éclaircir; la maison d'Autriche en fit les instruments de sa politique, et quand le philosophe examine leur histoire il ne voit pas que les Uscoques soient les seuls criminels."

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